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Montreal

From Mission Colony to World City

LESLIE ROBERTS

Macmillan of Canada
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For 'Red', with love

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Foreword

This book has been the work of many hands, but all worked together with one purpose. Thus it is not based just on the ideas of one writer, imposed on associates, but on those of a group of people all moving in the mainstream of Montreal life. As a team, all of us sense the uniqueness of this city, yet not one of the basic research group is what elsewhere is usually called a French Canadian. 'Involved' is the only fitting word for what any member of the non-French minority must be if he is entitled to call himself a Montrealer. The French- or English-speaking resident who avoids this involvement misses the real joy of living in what is simultaneously one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities and yet, like all metropolitan communities, still a group of 'villages' loosely bound together.

My personal vision of the city which has been home throughout my adult life (which has involved participation in two World Wars, long-time service in ten or eleven countries, and assignments which have taken in the whole of Canada) is that Montreal is one of the most 'civilized' of all the cities I have known. The love affair has been going on at least since high school days.

Montreal itself has been the jumping-off place for so many of the great things that have happened to Canada. In the days of the French regime it was the point of organization and departure for the courageous missionaries and explorers who followed the Mississippi to its mouth, and who travelled the country beyond the Great Lakes to the Pacific and the Arctic coasts. In many ways, therefore, it is the community from which

the interior of North America was first opened. For many years it was the home of the North American fur trade.

Somewhat later Montreal became the centre from which Canada itself was opened wide to settlement through the building, first of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and later of the group of disparate lines that were merged into the publicly owned Canadian National Railways in the 1920s by the late Sir Henry Thornton. It remains the head office and centre of both these great enterprises.

Today, Montreal can fairly be called the world's air capital, not merely because of traffic handled (other airports no doubt have more landings and take-offs than Dorval) but because it is the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations agency, and of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the co-operative body of major air lines.

The city can boast many other 'firsts'; most recently Expo 67, frontispiece of the centennial of Confederation, was the first Class One exposition ever held under the aegis of the International Bureau outside Europe.

In what other great city can you find a Mount Royal, rising in the centre hundreds of feet above the town and long ago set aside in perpetuity by far-sighted 'city fathers' as a natural park, its roadways still barred to automobiles (except for a throughway constructed in recent years around its rear flank)? Where else can you find such a view – to the Laurentians in the north and to the Green and Adirondack mountains in the south beyond the Eastern Townships? Where else can you find the loveliness of an Ile Ste. Hélène in the heart of a great river, beyond the bustling port?

As noted earlier, this is the work of many hands. From the beginning my elder son – John Grant Roberts – and I worked together, particularly on Part One. An unanticipated heart attack took him away long before his work was done. But much of what you read is a monument to his skill as a journalist and his love of Montreal. Thanks go to his wife, Mary, for much help, especially with the collating of chronology. I can never thank enough Grant's and my friend and colleague Dr. Hereward Senior, Associate Professor of History, McGill University, who has given help beyond description in research, often aided by his wife, Elinor.

You will find no formal bibliography in this book. Suffice it to say that close to one hundred sources, from Dollier de Casson to Donald Creighton, have been closely studied, in addition to documents from Maisonneuve's day to Drapeau's. Material in the city's archives, libraries, and elsewhere has been made freely available. I am grateful to all who have given such assistance, and to others who have helped in the selec-

tion of the illustrations. His Worship the Mayor, Maître Jean Drapeau, and Monsieur Lucien Saulnier, Chairman of the city's Executive Committee, have given freely of their time and advice. I trust the result is the story of people – people who through trial and error have built what began as a mission colony into a great world city, second only to Paris among cities whose primary mother tongue is French.

Leslie Roberts
Montreal
July 1969

Montreal

Part One

1 Prologue

Before there was anyone, there was the Great River, contorted from the Lakes through its vast Gulf to the sea in the form of a gigantic interrogation mark. The River and its drainage area – stark, brooding, and foreboding, most of it, but through its centre fertile and pleasant under a warm sun – were made by the passage of glaciers. Left behind were lakes and streams by the thousand, a glittering, pointless pattern shaken in the kaleidoscope of the gods. And dotted throughout, from the Gulf to the Lakes and beyond, were countless islands of myriad shapes and sizes, from Newfoundland to Cape Breton to Anticosti to Manitoulin. And almost in the centre of this great highroad to the heart of North America was the most important island of all: Montreal. There, at the point where navigation on the Great River is blocked by foaming rapids; where the Ottawa flows in from the northwest; a few miles from the River of the Iroquois and the pointing spear of the Hudson system – there, Montreal. At the foot of the interrogation mark, yet less the response than the point at which the queries about a new land were to be restated.

When it became known first to Europeans, the island was Hochelaga, village of the Iroquois and their home or that of other tribes for centuries. On the face of it, it was no marvel to the questing European; when Jacques Cartier erected a cross in the name of the Lord and of Francis I, King of France, it seemed merely a stepping stone to the storied wealth of the legendary Kingdom of the Saguenay – to the gold of a second Mexico, perhaps, or to the water route to the Spice Islands

of the East, to the known jewels and silks and frankincense of Cathay. It *was* a stepping stone to wealth, in fact. But it was the prosaic beaver and no Great Khan that was to provide it first; and the dream of Francis I of finding a source of gold and silver to match that of his arch-rival, Charles V, and from which he could pay for his Hapsburg wars, remained a dream.

The existence of a great land mass nine hundred leagues to the west across the Atlantic had been known to Europeans, if not to Europe, as early as the latter part of the ninth century of Christendom. It has even been suggested that Irish monks after fleeing to Iceland from Viking predators then made their way to what is now Cape Breton, there to disappear, probably by absorption into the Indian tribes that possessed the cross as an ornamental figure when Cartier came. In the eleventh century, Norsemen from Greenland settled briefly in what is now Labrador before beginning their long-drawn-out retreat to their native fjords. Through the Middle Ages America was left to its first settlers, the Indians and Eskimos. It was not until the fifteenth century was nearing its end that the European returned, spurred by the knowledge of the spice and gems of the Orient, gained through contacts in the Middle East during the Crusades. Europe's seamen now possessed adequate aids to navigate the vast Atlantic, and at least some of them had come to believe that the world was round and that by sailing west one should arrive at Asia.

It is altogether possible that Breton fishermen had reached the Grand Banks as early as the mid fifteenth century; if so, they kept their peace. Certainly, Christopher Columbus, sailing for Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, found the Caribbean Islands in 1492, though what he called the Indies turned out to be something else altogether. But, if there were no grand courts or silks or spices, there was gold. The race was on.

After Columbus, John Cabot, sailing for Henry VII of England out of Bristol, 'rediscovered' Cape Breton in 1497 and, skirting the Gulf coastline, found St. Pierre and the two Miquelons, and saw the distant, surly coast of Newfoundland. Later he sailed to Labrador and then southward along the seaboard as far as what is now New Jersey. Then João Fernandez and Gaspar Corte Real, for Portugal, elaborated the charts of the Gulf. And, some time during these years, cod, the silver of the sea, drew the Breton fishing boats and, after them, Jean Denis of Honfleur, in 1504, and Thomas Aubert of Dieppe, in 1508, brought back to France vague outlines of the new world.

It was not the prosaic cod that spurred Jacques Cartier of St. Malo to set out in 1534 with an expedition of sixty men in two small ships, and with the support of Francis I, but the growing hope of finding an

Eldorado of the north or a northwestern passage to Asia. Now forty-three, a pre-eminent mariner and a prudent leader of men, Cartier had sailed American waters before, going as far south as Brazil with the ill-fated Verrazano, whose last expedition he had brought safely home. On his first venture in command, he sailed through the Strait of Belle Isle to the south shore of the Gulf, entering Chaleur Bay and going ashore long enough at Gaspé Bay to put up a thirty-foot cross, claim the land for France, and distribute combs, hatchets, and knives to a party of Mohawk, two of whom he kidnapped. Then he sailed up to and along the northern coast of Anticosti Island where the strength of the current convinced him there was a great river beyond. But it was late in the season, and the little expedition headed home.

Back in France, his account of the smiling shores of Chaleur Bay and the Gaspé and his belief in the existence of the River were strengthened by stories from the captured Mohawk of a Kingdom of the Saguenay with a wealth of precious metal. His royal master shared the enthusiasm, and next spring Cartier set out again with three ships for the River. This time he found it, and proceeded to Stadacona, an Iroquois village where Quebec City now stands. From the chief, Donnacona, he learned of further Indian settlements to the west and heard more stories of the mythical kingdom. Leaving his two larger ships and most of his men to prepare for wintering at Stadacona, he continued up the River in the *Emerillon*, anchored in shallow, treacherous Lac St. Pierre, and carried on in longboats to Hochelaga. There, at a large stockaded village located roughly where McGill University now stands, he and his men were welcomed by about a thousand savages, who treated them with the awe due to gods. After the ceremonial exchange of gifts, Cartier climbed the mountain rising behind the long houses of Hochelaga, and from the top he looked out on the vast Saguenay kingdom, stretching northward to the blue haze of the Laurentians and slashed by the sweep of the Ottawa as it met the river he was to name St. Lawrence. Up the Ottawa, the Indians told him, was the route to the kingdom where could be found copper and gold like that on the handle of his dagger. West and south along the St. Lawrence was the land of silver. As gifts, the Indians had given him ten or twelve gold nuggets, and it was an excited explorer who, after naming the height Mont Réal (Mount Royal) in honour of Cardinal Medici of Monreale, in Sicily, returned to the *Emerillon* and to Stadacona.

It was a long, arduous winter. Ice formed on the inside of the ships' hulls and all but ten of the 110 Frenchmen came down with scurvy. For twenty-five it was fatal. By break-up the expedition was in no position to carry on and the ships sailed for St. Malo, bearing with them

a captured Donnacona, two other chiefs, and the two Indians they had taken on the previous voyage. Home again, Cartier regaled the court with stories of the River that seemed to lead to the Pacific and Asia, once rapids had been overcome. He presented Donnacona as witness to the wealth beyond Hochelaga and placed in the hands of his King the gold nuggets of Mont Réal.

Francis was once more at war with Spain within a fortnight of Cartier's return, but the gold samples and Donnacona's stories kept the new land bright in the King's mind. Further, the King was taken by a scheme advanced by the explorer through which the Great River might be settled as a base for its exploitation. By 1540 he was again in a position to consider overseas ventures seriously and asserted his intention to continue his search for lands 'where the sun shines for us as for others'.

As lieutenant-general for the venture and lord of the lands across the sea he appointed the Huguenot, Jean-François de la Roque, Sieur de Roberval, a veteran campaigner who was something of an authority on mining. Roberval's commission included settlement and the exploitation of the wealth of the Saguenay, especially its gold and silver 'mines'. As deputy and captain general to Roberval, Francis named Jacques Cartier.

Financial difficulties and an apparently inborn reluctance of most Frenchmen to leave their native land dogged the expedition from the outset. Roberval was forced to recruit 'volunteers' from the jails, some of them men awaiting execution – though well born, he stressed. Cartier had five ships, two of them his own, ready by early spring of 1541. Roberval was still wrestling with his finances when, on April 15, an exasperated Francis told Cartier to sail and expect Roberval in the New World later. With about 150 sailors, craftsmen, and labourers, copious provisions, cattle, and pigs, and a small arsenal of cannon, arquebuses, and pikes Cartier departed.

The voyage was difficult, but the expedition reached Stadacona more or less intact. Cartier chose a site some miles above the Indian village for his habitation, calling it Charlesbourg Royal. Thence he set out in small craft for Hochelaga. There, blocked by the boisterous Sault St. Louis (Lachine), he surveyed the western end of the island and learned of the extent of these rapids and of others not far away in the Ottawa. Past the latter, he was told, he would find a clear passage into the Saguenay kingdom. So much for that season; greater preparations were required before he could advance farther west. Back at Charlesbourg he received magnificent news. His men had discovered stones they were sure were diamonds and 'leaves of gold as thick as the nayle of a man'. His fondest hopes seemed to have been realized. Yet, perhaps

because of sickness, perhaps because of Indian hostility, he decided to go back to France in the spring without awaiting Roberval. In fact, he met the 'Generalissimo' at St. John's harbour in Newfoundland, but slipped away at night despite Roberval's instructions to stay. He had, he was sure, ample evidence to justify a report to the King. Naïve man. The gold proved to be iron pyrites and the diamonds quartz, famed in jest as 'les diamants de Canada'. Nor did Roberval have more to show when he came back a year later.

Thus ended the first bid by France for a place in the New World. For sixty years it was left to the transient fishermen and the Indians. Yet, though he brought home no gold and though he had not found a North-west Passage, Cartier had made a significant contribution to American geography and his full and accurate reports on the potentialities for farming, lumbering, and the fur trade proved the lasting value of the lands that would become New France.

The Grand Banks fishery off Newfoundland had, of course, been drawing fleets of Biscayans, Basques, Bretons, Britons, and Portuguese through all this time. And it was this homely occupation and its out-growth, the fur trade, that became the basis of the 'French fact' in North America. Cartier had traded his cheap knives, hatchets, and combs in the Gaspé and Chaleur Bay, and he did so at the instigation of the Indians, who stripped themselves naked of what they appeared to realize was their most valued possession in European eyes – their furs. As the French fishermen expanded their drying areas along the shores of Newfoundland, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and both sides of the Gulf, some of them gradually switched emphasis to the trade in furs and eventually built up an entrepreneurial group solely for that trade. Beaver pelts became the staple because they could be made into the best felt; as the demand for beaver-felt hats grew in Europe so did the trade in America, and Tadoussac at the mouth of the Saguenay River became its first entrepôt on the western side of the Atlantic.

The fisheries began and flourished as competitive free enterprise. The fur trade throughout its long history operated effectively only under monopolistic conditions, for capital requirements were large, hazards were high, and the Indian proved a sharp trader. Surpluses of any size forced down the price for pelts in Europe, turning profit margins into losses and leading often to bankruptcy. Various Frenchmen were granted monopolies of the New World trade, but it was not until one was given by Henry IV in 1604 to the Huguenot, Sieur de Monts, that the semblance of a viable operation came into being and the permanent roots of New France were put down.

Associated with de Monts were adventurers like the lawyer, Marc

Lescarbot, jaded courtiers like Poutrincourt who wished to settle in the uncorrupted simplicity of the New World, experienced mariners, traders of repute like Pontgravé, and the man who, more than anyone, deserves the title Father of New France – Samuel de Champlain: soldier, explorer, geographer, Catholic Christian visionary and, fortunately for history, diarist and journalist of no little skill.

Settlement and the fur trade were combined from the outset with this group, and Champlain's instructions on voyage after voyage continued to make hopeful references to a northwestern passage. There were colonists and traders and soldiers at the abortive first wintering at St. Croix Island on what now is the New Brunswick–Maine border, in 1604–5. The next season the same party built a habitation at Port Royal on the Annapolis Basin – the tentative beginning of Acadia's precarious existence. But these ventures were discouraging financially, and Champlain turned his and his principal's eyes to the St. Lawrence system, about which he knew a little from the old stories and from a visit to Tadoussac in 1603.

This decision to make one last attempt to find a suitable site for a settlement by retracing Cartier's footsteps proved decisive for France in North America. Though Champlain died while the riparian colony was still in a most precarious condition, he nevertheless drew its map, defined its aims and potentials, and, though frustrated in his desire to establish a society with roots in the soil, realized two other aims: consolidation of the fur trade in the north and a system for evangelizing the savage. Champlain was intelligent, aggressive, brave, and determined: a company promoter, perhaps, but one whose aims extended far beyond the balance sheet.

The beginnings of empire-building occurred in 1608 with the founding of a company habitation where the St. Lawrence narrows at Cape Diamond – a spot known to the Indians as Quebec. Immediately, Champlain was caught up in a power struggle between Indian factions – a struggle rooted in the fur trade which, since Cartier's day, had seen the sedentary Iroquois driven from their villages in the river valley by the roving Algonquin and Montagnais, superior now in war because of metal weapons obtained from the French. Loosely linked with them were those *déracinés* Iroquois, the Huron, whose villages between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay were at the centre of an area bountiful in beaver, whose skins were brought to Tadoussac by the middlemen Montagnais and Algonquin.

It was this group of Indians that drew Champlain into the struggle against the Iroquois Confederacy, its Five Nations then living in the area around Lake Champlain and westward towards Lake Ontario.

If Champlain was to continue to rely on the St. Lawrence–Ottawa trade route developed by the northern Indians, he could see that it would be necessary to eliminate the threat from the southern flank. Thus, in 1609, accompanied by only two other Frenchmen, he joined an Algonquin war party of sixty and voyaged up the River of the Iroquois (Richelieu) to a substantial lake to which he gave his name. There, at Ticonderoga, the three French arquebuses more than compensated for lack of numbers, and some two hundred Iroquois were routed in panic. It was the beginning of the long guerilla war which at times threatened the very existence of the St. Lawrence colony. Nevertheless, this battle and another the folloiwng year brought momentary security, and in 1611 Champlain was at Sault St. Louis, whose turbulent waters had barred Cartier's advance sixty years before. On the present site of Montreal he ordered land cleared and held the island's first fur fair with trading parties of Huron and Algonquin. It was a logical site for a post, but Champlain's plans for settlement were not to be realized for another thirty years – and then from motives altogether different.

The historic conflict between the St. Lawrence system and that of the Hudson to the south, the only other waterway giving access to the western hinterland from the seaboard, was already in the making in the year of Champlain's first success against the Iroquois. For it was then that the Dutch arrived at Manhattan and began an alliance with the Five Nations, which was later taken over by the English and resulted in a running battle that lasted until 1760 and was renewed in 1775 when the descendants of those first English broke away from the Crown. Its immediate effect as far as Champlain and his trading group were concerned was that the Iroquois now had access to European weapons and before long would more than avenge themselves for Ticonderoga. Champlain's journey to Georgian Bay in 1615 was partly in response to Huron appeals for help against the Iroquois, though equally it had commercial motives and there was probably even a lingering hope that a way might still be found to Asia. Whatever the case, an attempt in that year to smash the Iroquois Confederacy miscarried, due to the half-heartedness of a Huron attack against the main fortress of the Onondaga and the failure of their Andaste allies to appear at all. This miscarriage marked the end of the supremacy of the northern tribes and the beginning of the long period of insecurity for the St. Lawrence–Ottawa system.

Champlain was also plagued by difficulties resulting from disorganization in the French handling of the trade itself. Continuing shifts in government policy between monopoly and no monopoly and the religious wars of Louis XIII's minority combined to make efforts in the

New World almost fatuous at times. Then, ironically, just as the guiding hand of the great minister Richelieu made itself felt and the entrepreneurial end was put in the apparently firm hands of the Company of New France (the One Hundred Associates), the privateering English Kirke brothers wrecked two colonizing expeditions in 1628 and 1629 in which almost the entire capital of the new company had been tied up. For three years the Kirkes held Quebec itself until it was given back to France by Charles I in return for the unpaid half of his wife's dowry.

Nevertheless, the Company of New France survived and consolidated the fur monopoly even if it was unable to achieve much in the way of colonization beyond granting a few seigneuries, which were only very slowly taken up and even more slowly settled. In fact, settlement and the fur trade were in many ways incompatible, for the extension of farming meant the end of trapping and the need to go farther and farther at ever greater expense to find the pelts. As historian Donald Creighton has noted, the best 'settlers' from the point of view of the fur trade were those already there – the Indians. Similarly, though the missionaries urged colonization, their eyes were on the Indians too, especially the eyes of the Jesuits, who, after 1625, had a monopoly of the missionary work of the colony.

It was into this frail and insecure structure – a handful of Frenchmen clinging to a vast river route with a base at Quebec and a string of ill-manned and highly vulnerable posts – that Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, and his hardy band of evangelizers stepped in 1642.

2 'A Grain of Mustard Seed'

In the decade prior to the founding of Montreal the very life of New France was at stake. That the struggle to survive was maintained and succeeded was scarcely a tribute to the nominal masters of the tiny colony, across the sea in metropolitan France. Nor could it be attributed to any true imperial spirit on the part of the Company of One Hundred Associates – the real founders and maintainers of the minuscule establishment founded on the rock of Quebec. The colony remained French because no other European power either sought or was in any position to capture and occupy it. France had problems close at home infinitely more pressing than those of a small colony three thousand miles away, which was actually more a privately financed business enterprise than a colony in the truly national sense of the term.

Something of the spirit of Champlain still lived in the hearts of a few administrators and fur traders. To this must be added the zeal, devotion, and willingness for self-sacrifice of the Jesuit missionaries. But, for French survival as a colonizing and religious force (it is apparent today and was apparent to a few courageous men then), two things were essential if the colony on the St. Lawrence was ever to be much more than an almost tentative trading post: soldiers and civilian settlers. Without a military force capable of frustrating the repeated Iroquois

raiding parties, permanent settlement was precarious to the point of insanity – a bald fact that became only too apparent when a second colonizing effort began on the St. Lawrence in 1642 at Montreal, where the struggle again became a daily battle for survival by Maisonneuve and his small band.

France and most of Europe in the 1630s and 1640s were preoccupied with the bloodletting of the Thirty Years War (1618–48) and with the religious turbulence that was the legacy of the Reformation and Counter Reformation. The eyes of the great Cardinal–Duke–First Minister Richelieu were on national consolidation and the aggrandizement of France in Europe. The Court and its political entourage could give little help to the handful of Frenchmen who held stubborn ideas and ideals about the New World beyond the Atlantic.

Yet in the midst of this turbulence the Catholic religious revival of France flourished, mystical and austere, aimed in a spirit of fanaticism against the Calvinist Huguenots, themselves equally fanatical, and at laxity within the Catholic edifice as well. Such was the heritage of the Huguenot convert to Catholicism, Henry IV, and the background of the religious power-struggle of Louis XIII's teen-age years.

Pre-eminent in the Catholic revival was the influential secret society known as the Compagnie (or Ordre) du Saint Sacrement, a body whose members combined wealth, social position, ability, piety, and, at least indirectly, personal political influence. Indeed, it could be said that individual members, and through them the company itself, wielded an invisible power in every important area of French life, from Court to Confessional. One of the key concerns of the members was the conversion of heretic and heathen. Where could so devout a company find a lode more potentially rich than among the *sauvages* of New France, about whom Frenchmen at home had been informed through the writings of Champlain and, more especially, in the *Relations* of the Jesuits? The agency which the Compagnie du Saint Sacrement set up to achieve this aim was named the Société de Notre Dame de Montréal (actually Messieurs les Associés pour la Conversion des Sauvages de la Nouvelle France en l'Ile de Montréal). Its key members were drawn from the Saint Sacrement group, which nevertheless remained in the background, out of public sight.

More than one historian has wondered what the reasons for secrecy on the part of the parent body may have been. Others have simply accepted it as a fact. One nevertheless senses a period of much political manoeuvre behind closed doors – never fully explained, nor likely to be. The political climate of France itself as it was in 1640 should be kept in mind; the government, headed by the powerful Richelieu, was

outwardly devoutly Catholic but in actuality politically pragmatic and ruthless. The membership of Saint Sacrement, on the other hand, although politically involved, carried their piety as more than a façade or profession. The founder of the order, Henri de Lévis, Duc de Ventadour, was a powerful and pious Catholic layman who had gathered together like-minded persons of birth, wealth, and power, laymen and clerics of ultramontane outlook whose hostility to the pragmatism of Richelieu was intense. This may well have been the reason for secrecy.

What is clear is that, had it not been for the secret order and its wealth and power, the subsidiary body that founded Montreal would not then have come into being, as it is equally true that France itself would not have moved at the time to create such a colony as was envisaged. Evangelization and conversion, rather than the extension of national power, or even commercial settlement, were the impelling motives that created the first European community where Canada's metropolis and the second-largest French-speaking city in the world now stands. In Ventadour's case, inasmuch as he had purchased the viceroyalty of New France some years earlier, he was undoubtedly well aware of the failure of the One Hundred Associates to meet those colonizing and missionary obligations which fundamentally had been the reason for the founding of Quebec. It may be assumed that in helping to establish a second, and separate, settlement the principals were determined that the primary purpose – conversion of the Indians – should never become secondary in the proposed new venture.

Legend, reflecting the spirit of the times, traces the founding of the infant settlement, first called Ville Marie, to a series of divinely inspired accidents. The first of these may be termed the 'revelation', in 1635 or 1636, to a devout tax collector at La Flèche in Anjou, Jérôme le Royer de la Dauversière, that his personal mission was to found a hospital to serve both French (assuming that a settlement could be established) and Indians on the island of Montreal. Before his revelation occurred, Dauversière's regrets for his misspent youth had borne fruit in his instigation of the founding of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of St. Joseph at La Flèche. As he sought wider fields for good works, his attention was directed through his friendship with several Jesuit fathers and his reading of the *Relations* to the island in the St. Lawrence. Thus (still according to legend) in 1639 he accidentally met Jean Jacques Olier, subsequently the founder of the Order of St. Sulpice, itself a centre of religious revival. Their first meeting may have occurred in Paris. Another version places it on the steps of a church in La Rochelle, where the two men had been at worship and fell into chance conversation. No matter where it happened, or under what circumstances, their

talks made clear that they shared a mutual concern for the souls of the savages in distant North America. They joined forces, and in Paris secured the considerable financial backing of the wealthy Baron de Fancamp, an influential member of Saint Sacrement. Thus came into being in 1640 the Société de Notre Dame de Montréal. The new group made its purposes as public as the raising of funds and the recruiting of personnel required. Its real founders, the members of Saint Sacrement, continued to remain anonymous.

Title to the lush island in the St. Lawrence at the time was vested in Jean de Lauzon to whom this and many other parcels of land along the St. Lawrence, westward from Quebec, had been granted *in absentia* for services rendered or to be rendered, either to the monarch or to the founders of Quebec. Lauzon now transferred that title to Olier, Dauversière, and their nucleus of a founding company. With site, funds, and basic organization established, the task became one of finding a suitable leader for an expedition to create the missionary settlement. Their fortunate discovery was Paul de Chomedey, Sieur de Maisonneuve, a former professional army officer, approximately forty years of age, living in retirement in his native Champagne.

As one pieces together fragments that are part fact, part legend, what emerges is that at some juncture early in his retirement Maisonneuve had come into contact with Father Charles Lalemant of the Jesuits, who had served in Huronia (the Georgian Bay area). Apparently Maisonneuve had also read widely in the Jesuit *Relations* and had become greatly interested in the possibility of service beyond the Atlantic. To Father Lalemant also went Dauversière in search of a suitable leader for the proposed expedition. The candidate must be a man of military knowledge and skill, but also devout and filled with missionary zeal. It was as if Father Lalemant had said to Dauversière: 'I have just the man for you. His name is Maisonneuve. I will tell you where to find him.'

In the event, Dauversière went to Champagne and established himself in quarters in the inn where Maisonneuve was in residence. Legend suggests that he kept his purpose to himself until he had sized up the soldier. When he broached the proposal that Maisonneuve should lead the expedition and take full charge of the settlement and its defences, the latter embraced the idea enthusiastically.

Soon afterwards, when he was at La Rochelle seeking personnel and ships in which they could be embarked for the voyage to Quebec, Dauversière was visited by a frail young woman, Jeanne Mance, who had heard of 'the Montreal plan' in Paris and had journeyed to the Biscay port to offer her services. Mademoiselle Mance had experience

in nursing soldiers and her fellow-townsmen at Langres, when that community had been stricken by the plague. Although by no means a robust woman, she was ideal for the task of founding a hospital. And her friend, Madame de Bullion, the extremely wealthy widow of a former finance minister, undertook to supply the essential funds. Much of this is credited by the early historians to accidental meetings, to coincidence, even to divine intervention. Wherever truth may lie among the mists of legend, the nucleus was nevertheless formed. From its six original organizers, the Société quickly grew to a membership of thirty-five or forty.

What of New France, as it was in 1642, prior to the arrival of Maisonneuve and his small band of heroes? It was more a private enterprise than a national colony. Under the control of the Company of One Hundred Associates it was living, one might say, from hand to mouth. The French population totalled approximately 340 men, women, and children, of whom 150 were at Quebec, 60 at Trois Rivières, 50 at Beauport, 40 at Beaupré, and the rest thinly and widely scattered along the St. Lawrence. A few of the seigneuries in the vicinity of Quebec were in the elementary stages of agricultural development. They produced a little wheat of good quality. A few cattle grazed in the cleared fields. But the colony nevertheless still depended on France for almost all of its food and had largely failed to attract new settlers. Active as the Church had been throughout the colony's lifetime, there were still only two formal parishes – at Quebec and Trois Rivières – and only two priests directly involved in parish duties. The Recollets had been the first priests in New France in Champlain's day. They decided that their order was too weak in personnel and funds to continue, and they urged the Jesuits, who accepted, to take on the task. A few of the Recollets remained and were tolerated in their good works.

The early efforts of the Jesuits had been directed mainly towards conversion of the Indians in the vast area called Huronia, which lay between Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, reaching south to Lake Erie. But in spite of the Jesuits' heroism and perseverance, and the number of Indians they baptized, few of the natives became devout Christians. Nor had the results been much greater at the mission at Sillery, just west of Quebec. Ironically, all through the thread of the early history of New France it becomes apparent that the more venturesome Frenchmen took to Indian ways much more readily than the Indians took to European customs or Christian beliefs. Yet the colony's religious base had been established at Quebec in a college, a convent, and a hospital. The religious revival of France itself had been transplanted to North America through the wealth and work of such devout people as Madame

de la Peltrie, a young widow, and such devoted women of the cloth as Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, who established the Ursulines at Quebec and set down in writing much of its early history.

As Maisonneuve, his backers, and his small band of *émigrés* consolidated their plans in France, the Governor at Quebec, Montmagny, faced a serious challenge to the security of his own small and struggling 'empire'. In 1641 the Iroquois broke the 'eternal' treaty of peace they had signed with Champlain and launched the raids and devastation which became known as the First Iroquois War. Montmagny had strengthened the fortifications at Quebec and Trois Rivières and had undertaken construction of a fortified post at the mouth of the Iroquois (Richelieu) River, the site of the present city of Sorel. Although Quebec itself was regarded as relatively secure, the hazards in the outlying regions were great and severe. Understandably, Montmagny was aghast when he first heard of the project for settling the island of Montreal. Even in the best of circumstances the Governor at Quebec might understandably have been opposed to the establishment of a new settlement under an aegis other than that of the group that he served. To learn that the newcomers would arrive under the dangerous conditions that obtained in 1641 was, as the Governor saw it, almost unthinkable – indeed catastrophic.

Nevertheless Maisonneuve, Jeanne Mance, and their small expedition reached Quebec in August 1641, as passengers in three ships that had sailed from La Rochelle and Dieppe. Little is known of the voyages, other than that Maisonneuve sailed in the vessel that was last of the trio to arrive. Montmagny welcomed the newcomers with outward warmth, but immediately set about trying to dissuade the expedition's leader from venturing farther. Why not, he asked, settle on the Island of Orleans, so close to the sanctuary of Quebec? Maisonneuve's reply was the one to be expected from a leader who had accepted a firm assignment from his sponsors in France. 'I did not come here to argue, but to act,' he told Montmagny. 'If all the trees on the island of Montreal were to turn into Iroquois warriors, my duty and honour require that I establish a colony there.'

Accepting the Governor's view that the season was too late for the settlement to be established before freeze-up, Maisonneuve nevertheless made a reconnoitring journey up the river, accompanied by the reluctant Montmagny. Landing, he selected a site near the present location of Youville Square as the base for his settlement, took formal possession, re-embarked, and returned to Quebec. There the expedition wintered. His men prepared for the spring move forward into the hostile wilderness by building shallow-draft boats at Sillery and ready-

ing equipment and supplies. In May 1642, Maisonneuve and his band set out on the last leg of their journey. The group comprised some forty men, four women, and a few children. Their arrival where metropolitan Montreal now stands, which took place on May 17 and 18, 1642, is evocatively described in Francis Parkman's paraphrase of the Sulpician Dollier de Casson, who was Montreal's first historian:

> Maisonneuve sprang ashore and fell on his knees. His followers imitated his example; and all joined their voices in enthusiastic songs of thanksgiving. Tents, baggage, arms and stores were landed. An altar was raised on a pleasant spot near at hand; and Mademoiselle Mance, with Madame de la Peltrie, aided by her servant, Charlotte Barré, decorated it with a taste which was the admiration of the beholders. Now all the company gathered before the shrine . . . Montmagny, no very willing spectator; and Maisonneuve, a war-like figure, erect and tall, his men clustering around him – soldiers, sailors, artisans and labourers, all alike soldiers at need. They kneeled in reverent silence as the Host was raised aloft; and when the rite was over, the priest turned and addressed them:
>
> You are a grain of mustard seed, that shall rise and grow till its branches overshadow the earth. You are a few, but your work is the work of God. His smile is on you, and your children shall fill the land!

A prophetic utterance, indeed it was. But for the founders the ordeal of Montreal had only begun.

3 Fort Perilous: the First Decade

> . . . The first settlement was on a triangle of ground, the apex being where the St. Lawrence was joined by the little river which emptied itself there coming from the Northwest; the third side was marked by marshy land to the west (afterwards drained by the Sulpician Seigneurs) somewhat beyond where McGill street is now. Thus it resembled an island. At some distance from the apex (afterwards called Pointe à Callière) there was a small rocky island which guarded the snug little harbour. This was called Ile Normandin. Behind and rising to the east there was the little foothill which was destined to be the site of the permanent town of Ville Marie. But until 1653 the island-like meadow sufficed.

Thus wrote Dr. W. H. Atherton, much of whose life was devoted to the story of Montreal and whose histories of the city from its beginnings to the 1920s remain in many ways the most comprehensive in English. The little stream he mentions was called Rivière St. Pierre and it cut across the southwestern corner of Montreal Island, roughly along the line of the Lachine Canal. The first structure raised by the founders was the fort, called Perilous, a stockade of palings surrounding a handful of buildings set about a rough square, the whole in that apex of land formed by the confluence of two streams – the mighty St. Lawrence and the insignificant St. Pierre.

Perilous, indeed, that settlement was to become; but in the long warm summer of 1642 the hazards of outpost Ville Marie must have seemed as remote as the haze over the blue Laurentians to the north. Work was the watchword, and the men followed Maisonneuve's example with a will. First, tents were put up, then trees were felled for the stockade and the log buildings inside. The hardships of the winter were known from experience, but the Iroquois hazard, which they knew about only from Governor Montmagny's warnings, was one which Maisonneuve, at least, seems to have felt well able to manage.

In the meadow where the men worked were 'so many birds of different warblings and colours that they helped to make our Frenchmen feel at home in this uncivilized country,' wrote Dollier de Casson some thirty years later, at a time when the wilderness was still just next door. 'Truly God showed His favour to these new colonists by not letting the Iroquois discover them too soon, and so gave them time to repose a little in the shade of those trees with which the . . . meadow was fringed, where the sight . . . of the wild flowers helped them await with patience the arrival of the vessels.' The first few buildings were wretched – hutments and a small chapel. But in the latter, in July, the evangelizing frontiersmen baptized an infant, a dark-skinned child brought there with a party of Algonquin visitors. The setting may have been rude but the missionary purpose remained uppermost. Its basic *raison d'être* had been met.

Vessels arrived in August (probably shallow-draft longboats; seagoing ships from France seldom ventured beyond Quebec); with them came twelve new men for the colony, including one Gilbert Barbier – 'Minime' because of his size – who became the first carpenter and 'town planner' of Ville Marie, its architect. The new arrivals also brought word that forty thousand livres more had been subscribed in France to the funds for the settlement, whose financial needs remained the major concern of the parent organization. Money from France made up for what the colony was unable to produce itself, which was far from enough to maintain it. But even money was not as forthcoming as need demanded, and Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance soon became frequent travellers across the Atlantic in search of more financial aid and sustenance.

The colony solemnized the festival of the Assumption on August 15 and, according to Father Vimont, writing in the *Relations*, the Holy Isle of Montreal was, indeed, festive. 'The thunder of the cannon,' he reported, 'echoed throughout the whole island and the demons, though accustomed to the thunder, were terrified at a sound which spoke of the love we bear to the great Mistress. I doubt not also that the tutelary Angels of the Savages and of this country have marked the day in the holidays of paradise.' The Frenchman thus marked *his* feast and the

Indians took part in Ville Marie's first procession; then all went to visit the forest which still covered most of the island, where, the Indians said, dwelt *their* gods and ancestors. It was an early example of the sort of ecumenism the French colonists were determined to practise.

There were about sixty-five Frenchmen in Ville Marie as that first winter drew in. They were prepared for cold, and Iroquois threats they were at least aware of. Yet the awful potential of the Great River beside which they camped had escaped them. There was a sudden thaw near Christmas and the water rose about Fort Perilous. Nothing in their primitive engineering knowledge had prepared them for flood waters lapping the edges of the fort itself.

'They fell to their prayers,' Parkman writes, 'and Maisonneuve planted a cross in the face of the advancing deluge, first making a vow that, should the peril be averted, he . . . would bear another cross on his shoulders up the neighbouring mountain and place it on the summit.' The waters filled the ditch surrounding the fort, licked at the foot of the palisades, and for a time threatened the magazine. One prayed on such occasions, for unless divine succour intervened the alternative could be ruin and disaster. By Christmas Day the waters were receding. Early in the new year Maisonneuve carried out his vow.

> A large cross was made [says Parkman, after Father Vimont] and solemnly blessed by the priest; then on the sixth of January the Jesuit Du Perron led the way, followed in procession by Madame de la Peltrie, the artisans and soldiers to the destined spot. The commandant, who with all the ceremonies of the Church had been declared First Soldier of the Cross, walked behind the rest, bearing on his shoulder a cross so heavy it needed his utmost strength to climb the steep and rugged path. They planted it on 'the highest crest' [probably no higher than a point on Atwater Avenue as it curves north today from Sherbrooke Street] and all knelt in adoration before it. Du Perron said mass; and Madame de la Peltrie, always romantic and always devout, received the sacrament on the 'mountain-top', a spectacle to the virgin world stretched out below. Sundry relics of the saints had been set in the wood of the cross, which remained an object of pilgrimage to the colonists of Ville Marie.

This is one of many instances of the piety which prevailed and which bulk large in the writings of the Jesuits and the history of the Sulpician de Casson; time and again in the colony the spirit manifested itself amid scenes of bloodshed, carnage, and torture which were characteristics of the Indian wars. Parkman, a Bostonian who wrote a hundred years ago the most readable account of the period in English, captured

the heroic spirit of the early settlers of New France; yet he also revealed a certain Protestant impatience and, perhaps unwittingly thereby, the closeness of God's work in the daily lives of the first Montrealers.

> From Maisonneuve to the humblest laborer [he wrote] these zealous colonists were bent on the work of conversion. To that end the ladies made pilgrimages to the cross on the mountain, sometimes for nine days in succession, to pray to God to gather the heathen into His fold. The fatigue was great; nor was the danger less; and armed men always escorted them, as a precaution against the Iroquois. The male colonists were equally fervent; and sometimes as many as fifteen or sixteen persons would kneel at once before the cross with the same charitable petition. The ardor of their zeal may be inferred from the fact that these pious expeditions consumed the greater part of the day, when time and labor were of a value past reckoning to the little colony. Besides their pilgrimages, they used other means to attract and gain over the Indians. They housed, fed, and clothed them at every opportunity; and though they were subsisting chiefly on provisions brought at great cost from France, there was always a portion for the hungry savages who from time to time encamped near the fort. [These, of course, were such as the Huron, Algonquin, and Montagnais. The Iroquois were another story.] If they could persuade any of their sick or maimed to be nursed, they were consigned to the tender care of Mademoiselle Mance; and if a party went to war, their women and children were taken in charge till their return. As this attention to their bodies had for its object the profit of their souls, it was accompanied with incessant catechising. This, with some of the other influences of the place, had its effect; and some notable conversions were made. Among them was that of the renowned chief Tascouat, or Le Borgne, as the French called him – a crafty and indestructible savage, whom, to their own surprise, they succeeded in taming and winning to the Faith. He was christened with the name of Paul, and his squaw with that of Madeleine. Maisonneuve rewarded him with a gun, and celebrated the day by a feast to all the Indians present.

Such work was, of course, the whole point, and such successes were great occasions. As the first tangible project towards the successes hoped for in the years ahead, Maisonneuve, Mademoiselle Mance, and their followers early started work on the first Hôtel Dieu, on higher ground across the St. Pierre stream from the fort. The hospital was opened and dedicated in the autumn of 1644 on a site where St. Paul and St. Sulpice streets much later came to intersect. Its name is still proudly borne by one of Montreal's great general hospitals.

The evangelizing process, however, was perforce carried out intermittently. These 'soldiers of the Cross' found themselves more often soldiers than bearers of God's Word; the tribulations with the Iroquois set in early despite the breathing space of the first fortunate summer. Actually they had the long-term effect of slowly changing Montreal's *raison d'être* from religious to economic.

The tiny settlement had, of course, been permitted a lease of life in so far as the Indian menace was concerned during its first summer and winter. Yet the arrival of the menace was only a matter of time – the time required for the marauding Iroquois to discover Ville Marie and realize its vulnerability. The uneasy peace ended in the summer of 1643 when the colony was just over a year old. A raiding party of Iroquois, apparently advised of Ville Marie's whereabouts by the treachery of some of France's Huron allies, fell on a group of Frenchmen working outside the walls of the fort, killed three men, and took two others prisoner. Then, with the treachery characteristic of all Indian warfare, they feasted their Huron informants, and, as the latter slept, massacred a considerable number and took most of the rest prisoner – more often than not a fate literally worse than battle's quick death.

The Montreal company had been explicitly forbidden to participate in the fur trade in the agreement between the Company of One Hundred Associates and the overseas sponsors of the colony, which had provided title to its lands. But ironically it was the fur trade that was the main cause of the Iroquois wars, and at the root of it all was the role of North America in the history of European expansion. For the trade altered the life of the Indians and their intertribal relations, making them in essence auxiliaries of the fur entrepreneurs of Amsterdam, London, or Paris. In the case of the Iroquois, who had been driven earlier from the St. Lawrence valley to the region about Lake Champlain, the upper Hudson River, and south of Lake Ontario, the European principals were at first the Dutch.

In 1624, eighteen years before the founding of Montreal, the Dutch had built Fort Orange on Albany's present site, and from it developed the struggle for fur which kept the Empire of the St. Lawrence in more or less continuous conflict with that of the Hudson-Mohawk travel route for a century and a quarter. What made this Dutch fort such a threat was hardly its mere presence across two hundred miles of wilderness, but the fact that it became a magnet for furs, that the Iroquois, usually hostile to the 'French' Indians, went there, and that the Dutch, unlike the French, gave firearms in exchange for skins. The acquisition of arquebuses gradually gave the Iroquois a superiority over Huron, Montagnais, and Algonquin that for a time threatened the very existence

of New France – Montreal, especially. It also ended their effectiveness as sources of fur for the French and nearly ended their own tribal life.

Iroquois parties raided into the Ottawa trade route, seizing by force canoe-loads of valuable pelts bound for the French posts at Trois Rivières and Quebec. And, though Montreal was not then directly concerned in the fur trade, it was nevertheless a French outpost and an obstacle to the Iroquois in their war of attrition against New France and its more peaceable Indian allies. The Iroquois had, in fact, stepped up their warfare in the fall of 1641 and the spring of 1642 and, in the summer of the year Montreal was founded, attacked in force a group of French soldiers and labourers engaged in building Fort Richelieu (Sorel) for Montmagny, who hoped the fort would effectively block the Iroquois water route north to the St. Lawrence. In a fierce little battle, three hundred Iroquois were driven off. This fight established the cost – even with firearms – of a direct assault, but it did not deter the Iroquois's guerilla tactics, which were both their natural means of fighting and, under the circumstances, involving attacks on mere handfuls of Frenchmen gathered at widely scattered posts, the most effective. The colony at Montreal, although dependent primarily on supplies from across the Atlantic, nevertheless hoped to produce at least some of its own food. This involved clearing and planting allotments a short distance outside the walls of Fort Perilous. Quite probably the first victims of the Iroquois at Montreal were men engaged in tilling the soil outside the palisade.

Old soldier that he was, Maisonneuve easily perceived that fabian tactics were forced upon him, at least until such time as he had the men to retaliate in strength. He established a system of warning bells and a patrol of dogs to warn of skulking braves. But there were hotheads in the company, and the leader was accused of something close to cowardice as he consistently refused to seek a pitched fight with the Iroquois. Finally, in March 1644, he bowed to the pressure of the 'forward' school and led a considerable sortie against an Iroquois raiding party. Five of Maisonneuve's men were killed and Maisonneuve himself nearly suffered the same fate. A pistol in each hand, he was covering the withdrawal of his chastened warriors when the Iroquois chief hurled himself at him. The first pistol misfired; the second, fortunately, did not and the chief was killed. Maisonneuve made his escape to the fort as the pursuing braves pulled up at the chief's body. For a long time there were no further demands for sorties.

In Parkman's words:

> Maisonneuve was as brave a knight of the Cross as ever fought in Palestine for the sepulchre of Christ; but he could temper his valor

> with discretion. He knew that he and his soldiers were but indifferent woodsmen; that their crafty foe had no equal in ambuscades and surprises; and that, while a defeat might ruin the French, it would only exasperate an enemy whose resources in men were incomparably greater. Therefore, when the dogs sounded the alarm (one, known as Pilote, being something of a heroine in this line), he kept his followers close and stood patiently on the defensive.

Finally, stories of the ghastly mutilations practised only too often on missionaries and their helpers who deliberately went among the Iroquois were one more significant reason to win support for the policy of caution. Thanks to the arrival in late summer of 1643 of Louis d'Ailleboust de Coulonge, a member of the Société de Montréal, the huddled buildings of Ville Marie became relatively secure. Like Maisonneuve, d'Ailleboust, later to become Governor of New France, combined with his piety a good store of soldierly knowledge and experience, especially in the art of fortification. Under his direction the original flimsy palisade was strengthened by solid, earth-filled bastions. Fort Perilous had been made into a haven of refuge and safety.

But to the colonists the threat of an Indian raid remained always just behind the nearest thicket, when it was not directly apparent. The Iroquois's policy was one of attrition, compounded by terror. They were not prepared to take the casualties implicit in direct assault on the fort, but they were more than ready and able to maintain an active policy of harassment against the colonists and of raids against the Indians more friendly to the French; this, as has been indicated, took a heavy toll of the fur supply. In some years, in fact, it was cut to nil, to the benefit of the Dutch at Fort Orange (Albany).

Raiding, torture, and robbery were more than 'policy' for the Iroquois. To the marauder the silent forest was a sanctuary in which to hide, waiting to pounce on the traders in their canoes, often keeping silent watch for day after day. By night they could creep up in silence on the settlers' houses, or lie in wait for a hunter or worker to return to his domicile, and then strike him down with a gun or a tomahawk. This was the 'war of attrition' as fought by the Iroquois in New France, and especially at exposed Ville Marie.

In these early days the Mohawk appear to have been the shock troops of the Five Nations Confederacy and their long-term casualties were high in relation to their numbers, for there was no lack of courage even if their traditions of warfare were something less than chivalrous. Treaties and agreements of varying value were reached from time to time between French and Iroquois, but there was no over-all sense of discipline among the warriors and these understandings would often be

violated by individual braves, or by small groups on the slightest pretext – or none.

The *Relations* of the Jesuit fathers, de Casson's history, and other journals and letters of the time – or of those who remembered it – are filled with the sense of ever-present dread: the backdrop against which all that happened in Ville Marie or Trois Rivières or Quebec was played out. In 1651, for example, fifty Iroquois penetrated to Montreal and, on May 6,

> they struck down Jean Bédard and carried off his wife Catherine Mercier [sic], whom they later cruelly burned alive after cutting off her breasts, nose and ears. On the same day they scalped Jean Chicot, who survived. On July 26, two hundred warriors attacked the hospital [at Ville Marie] and were driven back by Lambert Closse and his sixteen men. At Three Rivers, raiders shot two Frenchmen who were out fishing and some Hurons near the post, and in August slaughtered another settler. Not even Quebec proved immune. In April, the enemy assaulted workmen in the fields and clambered up Ste. Genevieve Hill right to the gates of the fort and assassinated a woman peacefully occupied in her housework. . . . In Montreal especially, and in Three Rivers, 'at night, no one dared open his door, nor even by day venture four steps from the house without gun, sword and pistol'.

The colony, wrote one of the nuns at Quebec, was 'most upset'.

That there was any growth and accomplishment at all in Ville Marie during this first decade is remarkable, indeed. The courage of the majority of colonists and the steadfastness of their backers in France deserve high tribute. Not surprisingly, the population grew but slowly. The arrival of the vessels from France with their foodstuffs, wine, weapons, and new settlers was always *the* great event. Yet it must be surmised that they returned with passengers, too; for not a few found the going too hard and went back to the motherland.

Naturally, those who came out were a mixed lot, both in motives and passions. Piety, of course, genuine or pharisaical, was a sure *passe-partout*; fortunately, it was a quality in greater abundance than was usual, even then. Yet one did not build walls, or houses, on piety alone, or use firearms, or till fields, or catch fish. For much of this mundane work the contract artisan, soldier, or labourer was essential, though it was work stiffened by the soldierly leadership of a Maisonneuve, a d'Ailleboust, a Closse; the selfless service of women like Jeanne Mance and, later, Marguerite Bourgeoys; the bravery and willingness to accept all hazards of the Jesuits like Jogues, Lalemant, or Brébeuf; the in-

souciance and linguistic abilities of Le Moyne, the colony's first translator of the Iroquois tongue.

One sort of piety was represented by the wife of d'Ailleboust, who came out with him in 1643. As a child she had taken a vow of perpetual chastity and she had made its maintenance a condition of their marriage. When d'Ailleboust, much her senior, was caught up in the zeal of the Société de Montréal and announced that he would devote the rest of his life to its service in the New World, the bride refused to even consider such a move and asked never to hear of it again. Soon, however, she fell seriously ill and promised God that if He would restore her, she would make the journey to Ville Marie. She recovered, hesitated, fell ill again. At last, says Parkman, 'an inward light revealed to her it was her duty to cast her lot in the wilderness'. Not only that, but she convinced her sister it was *hers*, too, and Mademoiselle Philippine de Boulogne embarked with them. In the colony, 'the spectacle of their ardour, as disinterested as it was extravagant' served 'to exalt the religious enthusiasm in which alone was the life of Ville Marie'.

The case of the Sieur de la Barre was something else again. He arrived at Ville Marie in command of one of the early reinforcement parties but turned out, says Lanctot, to be 'a hypocrite with a rosary at his belt, who was expelled later . . . for his free conduct with the more immodest beauties of the forest'. Such conduct later became fairly common among the swashbuckling *coureurs de bois* who made continuance of the fur trade possible and whose wandering tendencies were a source of constant annoyance to, among others, Bishop Laval, who felt the qualities of a homebody more valuable in the long run to the colony.

Meanwhile, Ville Marie had received corporate status of a sort in 1644 through letters patent from the Queen Regent which, in addition to being lavish with praise for the colony, gave it the right to select a Governor (Maisonneuve was promptly confirmed), to continue raising fortifications, to have free passage on the St. Lawrence, and to maintain whatever number of priests might be required. This royal patent nevertheless also reaffirmed the pre-eminence of the Company of One Hundred Associates (at Quebec) in matters relating to the fur trade and the administration of justice, at that juncture no serious curb.

In the mid 1640s, the colony of New France as a whole was in one of the periodic troughs which marked its uneven early fortunes. The Company of One Hundred Associates was near to bankruptcy, causing a dangerous drain on the resources of its more solvent members with no great hope of return. It was with no great difficulty, therefore, that

the fur-trading monopoly was 'sublet' to a body called the Community of Habitants, a company supposedly involving the whole Canadian community, represented through heads of families, who were divided into three 'classes' according to prominence, and who shared in the profits of the company accordingly. A managing committee included the Governor of the colony at Quebec and the Superior of the Jesuits, and there was to be an 'assembly of interested people'. The general intention was that, inasmuch as profits from the fur trade had become so unreliable and the very existence of the colony doubtful, the men on the spot might provide new stability because of their more direct interests.

The agreement with the One Hundred Associates was ratified in March of 1645 and the new Habitant company became sole owner and seigneur of New France with a trade monopoly extending westward from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, exclusive of Acadia. In return, the Habitants were to pay an annual tribute to the older company in France and to bear the colony's expenses: maintenance of the Governor, clergy, garrisons, and general administration. They were also to bring out each year twenty new colonists of either sex.

The Société de Montréal, through Dauversière in France, came to an agreement with the new company by which Ville Marie would have a trade store and places on the administrative organization in Quebec – the missionary colony's first deviation from its founders' purpose, but obviously one deemed essential to economic, perhaps even political, survival. The Community of Habitants agreed to bear the costs of the garrison at Ville Marie, which would remain under Maisonneuve, and, after three years, the expenses of the Jesuits who were serving the settlement. Through its representatives among the three 'classes' of habitants, Ville Marie would receive a share in the profits of the fur trade.

Splendid though this scheme might have appeared on paper, it proved dismal in practice. The key directors in Quebec apparently were almost entirely interested in what they could take out of the company themselves. Even more, an increase in Iroquois hostilities in 1646 (when Father Jogues was martyred while attempting to treat with the Mohawk, with whom France was nominally at peace) so terrified the Huron middlemen that they refused to venture into the colony with furs. The profits of the Community of Habitants, good the first year, were non-existent in the second. The situation in New France became even more desperate than it had been before the 'reorganization'.

In this chaotic situation Maisonneuve decided he must act to save

Ville Marie. Allied to a dissident faction among the entrepreneurs at Quebec, he set out with one of them, Giffard, for France and there presented a list of complaints about irregularities practised by the Habitants company and, incidentally, put forward arguments in favour of a bishop for Montreal (a bid which seems to have foundered on Jesuit opposition and which was to lead later to considerable religious bitterness over clerical authority in New France). Maisonneuve and the dissident Giffard, who had joined him at Quebec, reached the ear of the Royal Council in France, and three of its members – Laisne, de Morangis, and de Mesme – were named commissioners to straighten out the affairs of New France. Significantly, all three were also members of the Société de Montréal; Ville Marie's influence behind the scenes in France obviously remained strong.

At any rate, the commissioners moved quickly to curb the excesses of the leaders of the Habitants company by creating a Superior Council of Quebec to oversee all operations. This at first comprised the Governor, the Superior of the Jesuits, and the Governor of Montreal, and was put in clear authority over the Community of Habitants as far as managing the commercial and administrative affairs of New France was concerned. The edict also provided for the election of syndics (community officials) in Quebec, Trois Rivières, and Ville Marie to advise the council at Quebec, though not to vote on its decisions. Another provision permitted the people generally to trade in furs, though stipulating that they would use only French-made trade goods and sell furs only to Community of Habitants stores and at fixed prices. Measures were also taken to encourage immigration, and a formal annual budget of 49,000 livres was created to bear the costs of administering New France, 10,000 livres of which was earmarked for the Governor and garrison of Montreal. The first syndics were elected in the summer of 1647 and the first meeting of the Superior Council – Montmagny, Father Lalemant, and Maisonneuve – was held that autumn.

In the course of this reorganization, Maisonneuve had been offered, but had refused, the governorship of the entire colony. The next year, still dissatisfied with the way things were going, he sent his lieutenant, d'Ailleboust, to Paris with new complaints and a request that d'Ailleboust be appointed to succeed the ageing Montmagny. The request was granted, and d'Ailleboust was named Governor of New France in March 1648. In addition, the edicts of the previous year were amended slightly, providing for two more councillors to sit at Quebec, their choice being made in consultation with the syndics. The salaries of the three Governors (at Quebec, Trois Rivières, and Montreal) were reduced somewhat, and out of the over-all saving of some 19,000 livres a

mobile force of forty soldiers was to be established to patrol the river routes in summer and to swell the garrisons in winter. The Governor of Montreal was no longer to be a member of the Superior Council, but, as d'Ailleboust was Maisonneuve's 'man', this was of little matter.

Finally – and most significantly, in view of the future – provisions for the fur trade were modified again, permitting the sending of 'volunteers' into the forests to deal for furs directly with the Indians. These 'volunteers' became the first *coureurs de bois*, who assumed the role of middlemen with the decline of the Huron and Algonquin in that role under Iroquois aggression. It was the 'volunteers' and their successors who, going farther and farther afield into the northwest, brought about the revival of the fur trade and, as time passed, explored the continent as far as the Rockies in the west and the mouth of the Mississippi in the south in the name of France.

But these great ventures were for the future. For the moment the affairs of Ville Marie, and of New France as a whole, seemed to have taken on a new optimistic outlook, thanks not a little to Maisonneuve, to the Société de Montréal (and to its parent, Saint Sacrement). The reorganization met with applause in New France. Unfortunately it was not binding on the Iroquois.

4 The Second Decade

Something more than administrative reorganization in New France was needed to ensure a viable future for the colony as a whole, and for Ville Marie in particular. The first decade of the island outpost ended in a crisis as bad as those that had occurred almost annually through the first ten years – worse, if anything. The physical and economic hazards remained as great as they had been in 1642, or greater, and many in New France pondered whether there was any future at all for Frenchmen in America. In a way, the wonder is that there was a second decade at all, that the views of the Jeremiahs did not prevail and that the entire enterprise was not abandoned – or at least the Montreal end of it. For Montreal continued to be the outpost most exposed to the harrying tactics of the Iroquois. Lacking the manpower to take the offensive, it was constantly faced with the ruin of what little progress towards self-sufficiency had been achieved.

Under the Company of One Hundred Associates at Quebec, New France had reason for existence only, in the last analysis, as a source of profit to be extracted from the fur trade. Reorganization of the company's operations in the New World may have curbed peculation; but despite sincere protestations, it did not result in any decisive increase in military potential or in population through immigration. It was not, in fact, until Louis XIV reached his majority and, through his great minister Colbert, took the colonies firmly in hand, from 1663 onward, that any real guarantees of a future were to be had. In the meantime, Montreal struggled on from day to day, losing in one season what it had gained the year before, clinging to existence more because a hand-

ful of leaders like Maisonneuve, Jeanne Mance, Closse, d'Ailleboust, Le Moyne, and the Jesuits were determined not to go, and because individuals of wealth in France continued to help, than from any optimism based on hard fact. Whatever they lacked in material resources, the founders were wealthy in courage. During the early period neither Quebec nor Montreal was a 'colony' in the sense that it was governed by the authorities in metropolitan France, or was even under their direct sanction. In the case of Ville Marie de Montréal, the colony was essentially a religious missionary enterprise, subsisting on help from outside, little of which came from the home government in France. It is in this context that the early history of New France, and especially of Montreal, must be viewed.

The key to the state of the colony and of the minds of even its most dedicated members on the eve of the second decade is found in the reaction to the disaster in Huronia (adjacent to what is now the town of Midland, Ontario), where France's key Indian allies, the Huron, were almost wiped out by the Iroquois and where such men as the Jesuit Fathers Brébeuf and Lalemant met a terrible martyrdom at the stake.

In the summer of 1650 after the slaughter at the villages about Georgian Bay, the Jesuit Father Ragueneau with a party of Huron survivors passed through Ville Marie en route to Quebec. 'At Montreal,' he reported, 'there are barely sixty Frenchmen, twenty Huron, a few Algonquin, and two of our Fathers. They cannot leave the fort, which is always very much exposed.' De Casson recorded the horror and hopelessness in the minds of the people. The general impression, he says, was: 'If we, who are only a handful of Europeans, do not offer a firmer and more vigorous resistance than 30,000 Hurons have done, then we must reconcile ourselves to be burnt alive at a slow fire with all the refinements of unheard-of cruelty.' In Quebec, Mother Marie de l'Incarnation wrote that without help from France 'the colony . . . would have to be abandoned or all would perish'.

The following year, 1651, was, according to the Jesuit *Relations*, the *annus terribilis*. It was 'a marvel that the French . . . were not exterminated'. The island colony was cut off and hemmed in. The population was reduced. Even Jeanne Mance's hospital, on higher ground outside the palisade, became a fort. It was these grim circumstances that convinced Maisonneuve that he must make a last desperate plea in Paris. As he departed he told Jeanne Mance that unless he could return with at least a hundred men he would not return at all. He charged her that under those circumstances she should terminate the colony and bring the survivors home.

Somehow they hung on through two wretched years before Maisonneuve came back with succour, though word of it had preceded him by several months. And what a party he brought with him! There were 154 in all, including three surgeons, three millers, two bakers, a brewer, a cooper, a copper-smith, a pastry cook, four weavers, a tailor, a hatter, three stove-makers, a shoemaker, a cutler, two armourers, three masons, a stone-cutter, four tilers (men to lay tiles or 'drains'), nine carpenters, two joiners, a saw-maker, a nail-maker, a pavior (or 'paver'), a farrier – even two gardeners. In addition there were sixty simple tillers of the soil. All presumably knew the use of arms – or soon learned. All had been hired to serve as *engagés* for five years, with return passage guaranteed for those who desired it. The population was more than doubled in a day in November 1653.

Along with the men of this second founding party came the woman whose name stands alongside that of Jeanne Mance in the heroic early annals of the city – Marguerite Bourgeoys, thirty-three years of age, schoolmistress, who was to become the founder of the Congregation of Notre Dame, one of the great teaching orders of nuns whose Mother House is in Montreal today. For the previous twelve years she had been prefect in charge of a lay congregation in Troyes and had been about to take vows when, under the guidance of Maisonneuve's sister, who was Superior of the Congregation of Notre Dame in Troyes, she chose a calling in the wilderness. She was, Maisonneuve wrote to Jeanne Mance, 'a good girl', and would return with him to Ville Marie to help with the work. She and Mlle Mance became firm friends from their first meeting and, in the interlude of peace which prevailed for a time after the 'second founding', began anew the work of the hospital. In addition, Marguerite began teaching a few Indian children in a small room in the hospital building.

She was to be an outstanding heroine in Ville Marie and New France for almost four decades. 'Montreal's first social worker, all hail to her!' as the historian W. H. Atherton says. She was the moving spirit in the founding of the Mariners' Chapel of Bonsecours in 1657, the same year in which she also opened the colony's first school in a converted stable. The record of her work is astounding from the moment of her arrival through to her retirement from active duty as Superior of the Congregation of Notre Dame de Ville Marie in 1693, and to her death in 1700, when the aged Dollier de Casson pronounced her eulogy.

In the late autumn of 1653 Montreal had at least the appearance of new life, even if the essential conflicts had been no more than postponed. There was peace – 'lull' may be a better word – with the Iroquois. There was a nucleus of artisans and tradesmen, even the start of a

professional class (notary Bénigne Basset became town clerk in 1655 and there is a record of one Jean St. Père as syndic earlier, so the outlines of a municipal corporation were there, too). And there were those new tillers of the soil, several of whom, Atherton notes, were competent sawyers. The essential personnel were at hand, then, for a settlement that was built almost entirely of wood – and sweat.

In that year of the second founding, Atherton wrote almost three hundred years later, the site of the settlement 'was the little foothill marked afterwards by the wooden palisades and later by the stone fortifications. It is the heart of the downtown business section of modern Montreal.'

Montreal's pre-eminence as a centre of the fur trade and site of the annual fur fairs lay ahead; such economic emphasis as there was, was on the development of agriculture. The aim was twofold: to give the colony some degree of self-sufficiency and to secure continuity of settlement by the *engagés* when their five-year contracts were up, by giving them a stake in its future. At the height of his fabian policy in the late 1640s, Maisonneuve had been criticitized by the leaders of the Société de Montréal in France for his slowness in granting land. Protests that such grants were next to meaningless, as they could seldom be worked, went unheeded. On his return from his voyage home in 1648, therefore, he took advantage of one of the many 'reprieves' to parcel out a number of concessions of thirty or forty arpents, radiating in a northeasterly direction from the fort about as far as present-day Ontario Street. Yet, between 1642 and the second founding, only seventeen concessions had been taken up, and while one year they were productive, the next they were profitless because of Indian raids during seeding or harvest. The Iroquois knew well the principles of attrition.

From 1653, however, the pattern began to change with the new confidence wrought by Maisonneuve's reinforcements. In 1654 and again in the next year, seventeen farming concessions were allotted – in two years twice as many as in all of the first eleven. These were generally of thirty arpents (acres), with an additional arpent for a home on the projected townsite. Maisonneuve was authorized to provide some financial help and the settlers (habitants) formed mutual assistance societies to put up each other's buildings and clear land. Gradually subsistence began to be realized, in food, at least, though reliance on France for virtually everything else continued.

Families began to be founded, too. In 1654, for example, thirteen marriages were recorded by the parish – there had been only ten in all the years before. Also about this time, Maisonneuve established his defence force on a militia footing, the men being divided into squads

according to their locales and given certain civic and social as well as soldierly duties. One of their early tasks was to escort Marguerite Bourgeoys to the site of Maisonneuve's original cross, long-since destroyed by the Iroquois. She supervised the installation of a new one and the militiamen built a palisade around it. Once again it became the site of regular pilgrimages.

Thus, with the second founding, Montreal was embarked on what proved to be a period of steady growth, even if this appeared at times to be anything but secure. By the late 1660s Montreal had passed Quebec as the main centre of population in New France. By that time, Ville Marie could record 758 adult householding inhabitants to Quebec's 444. Of these, 462 were men and 296 women. There were 518 children or unmarried persons. The most rapid growth occurred between 1665 and 1672 when a large number of soldiers from the Carignan-Salières Regiment took up land and settled on it, as they were discharged after the pacification of the Iroquois. Yet if their presence swelled the town's population it also increased the problems of morality and discipline. By the time the expansionist trend was marked and growing, the pious aura of the founders had dimmed among the general population.

Between 1655 and the establishment of royal rule eight years later, the growth of population was not large enough, nor of a sufficiently military character, to neutralize the Iroquois. In effect, then, the long-term result of growth was to put additional strains on the Company of One Hundred Associates and the Compagnie du Saint Sacrement at a time when the former was losing interest in the economic potential of New France and the latter, because of the changing power relationship at home, was gradually being forced towards dissolution. Some further help was forthcoming for Ville Marie from the Compagnie, but the strain increased to the breaking point and the Saint Sacrement, hopeful of maintaining the original mission intention, in part at least, looked for a successor with strength in the things of both spirit and flesh. This the Compagnie found in the Order of the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice, linked through its founder, the Abbé Jean Jacques Olier, and others to Saint Sacrement. But the transfer was not simple.

What developed into a sometimes rancorous dispute between the Sulpicians and the Jesuits for control of the Church in the New World began simmering during a visit by Maisonneuve to France between 1665 and 1667. High among Maisonneuve's reasons for making the voyage were the promotion of an episcopal see for New France and the provision of a permanent parish clergy for Ville Marie. He also planned to bring back with him a nucleus of the nursing Sisters of St. Joseph to help in the Hôtel Dieu as had long been planned. There was,

as we have indicated, a considerable rivalry for prominence in the colony between the semi-autonomous Montreal and what was in effect the capital, Quebec. The rivalry was fundamentally economic, but whereas in the pressure from Maisonneuve and Montreal over mismanagement by the Community of Habitants it had taken a political form, it was now to assume a religious one.

Olier and the Sulpicians seem to have shared the view that the time was finally ripe for the establishment of a bishopric in New France, a request twice rejected previously, and, because of their ties and the waning influence of the Compagnie du Saint Sacrement, they accepted the ministry of the Montreal parish. To lead it they chose the Sulpician, Abbé Gabriel de Queylus, a wealthy and highly capable priest who was given the rank of Superior of the Order in New France, a significant title for a man who was nominally taking over a parish of less than five hundred souls. De Queylus, in fact, had been put forward as an episcopal candidate, and in the interim had his status further reinforced by being appointed Grand Vicar for the whole colony of New France by the Archbishop of Rouen, under whose see the community came. When de Queylus reached Quebec with a small staff of clerics in July 1657, the Jesuit Superior de Quen agreed to suspend his office as Vicar-General pending clarification from France; his title had not been revoked.

Meanwhile, the Jesuits had obtained from Governor Lauzon a grant of land along the south shore opposite Montreal at Prairie de la Madeleine as a base for a mission – presumably to enable them to be on the ground if the battle for clerical power between Jesuit and Sulpician were to be joined at Montreal as a result of internecine clerical warfare in France. Something approximating a cold war began as de Queylus and the Sulpicians settled in at Ville Marie to the accompaniment of accusations from the Jesuits, who had thus far borne the burden of the colony, that the Sulpicians were conducting a campaign against them 'more vexatious than Iroquois wars'. These charges provoked countercharges from the new Sulpician Superior that the Jesuits were interested in controlling the entire colony, spiritually and temporally. It was not an issue that could be resolved in New France, for it was in essence merely a reflection of the struggle being carried out in high places at home.

The outcome was victory for the Jesuits, whose nominee, François Montmorency de Laval, neither Sulpician nor Jesuit, was created titular Bishop of Petrea and sent to Canada as Vicar Apostolic in June 1659. He became, of course, the great figure in the establishment of the Church on a firm basis in New France – a base on which, in many ways,

it still rests. Yet, serious as it must have been at the time, his consolidation of authority in the colony has a certain comic quality from this distance in time.

In August 1659 de Queylus journeyed to Quebec to assure Laval that he had no intention of asserting a competing authority as Grand Vicar. Meanwhile, a letter arrived for de Queylus from the young King Louis XIV, telling him not to infringe on the powers of Laval. At the same time came another from the Archbishop of Rouen reasserting de Queylus's position as Grand Vicar, Rouen (friendly to the Sulpicians and to Saint Sacrement) still being determined to have the final word in the colony. Finally, further letters written later in the name of the King forbade the Archbishop of Rouen to exercise any jurisdiction in New France. Laval asserted his spiritual sovereignty over the entire colony, de Queylus included, and urged Governor Lauzon to send de Queylus back to France. The Sulpician left in October, having indicated his determination to resolve the issue in his own favour and then come back. On hearing this, Laval secured a *lettre de cachet* from the King forbidding de Queylus – incidentally a member of the Société de Montréal – to leave France again without royal consent.

The Sulpicians and the Société de Montréal in France made one last bid for papal intervention in their favour. This served to reassert the authority of the Archbishop of Rouen. De Queylus returned to Quebec with authorization from Rome, thereby appearing to Rouen to confirm its authority in Montreal. But de Queylus's presence apparently was regarded by Laval in his 'palace' at Quebec as inimical to a central religious authority in New France. He ordered the Sulpician not to proceed to Montreal on pain of suspension from sacerdotal duties. De Queylus ignored the order, made his way up the river by canoe, and resumed his role of Superior. Laval then ordered him back to Quebec. De Queylus ignored this, too. The issue was finally resolved when the new Governor, d'Avaugour, arrived with new letters ordering de Queylus back to France and finally confirming Laval's authority. The Sulpician departed in October 1661.

Contradictory orders from a court not yet firmly in King Louis's hands lay at the bottom of the clerical minuet. The King was later to insist that no letters be dispatched to the New World without his 'full cognizance of the case'. In days when a year could elapse between the dispatch of an order and a report on its results, such clarity was essential if utter chaos was to be avoided.

'Inflexible when it came to never yielding' was Mother Marie de l'Incarnation's characterization of Laval's conduct when he felt the will of God was at stake. This characteristic, among many others, enabled

him to ensure the position of the Church as an institution in New France. Over the years the conflict was forgotten. The Sulpicians restricted their activity to Montreal, and there as priests, teachers, and seigneurs they played an outstanding role. The rift with the Jesuits and Quebec was healed and the Church's functions broadened in every sphere as New France grew.

With the final clarification of Laval's authority and the closing of ranks in a 'second founding' of its own, the Church brought new strength to its influence on the moral tone of colonial society and to its responsibility towards the Indians.

On the surface, at least, the question of Indian relations was linked closely to drink: in addition to bringing Christianity and some of the material amenities of European life, the white man in America had also brought brandy and rum. These combined cheapness and portability with potability and soon became the favourite item of trade in North America. Excessive consumption of brandy had an even more deleterious effect on the Indians than it did on Europeans. It weakened their health and left them even more vulnerable to European diseases to which their resistance was low in any case. It was a serious factor in the near-ruination of the Algonquin and Montagnais, especially. Beyond this, however, the debauched behaviour of the Indians spread to the *coureurs de bois*, and by 1659 it was common for the fur fair in one of the French settlements to degenerate into a grand orgy in which lives were sometimes taken in great brawls and the whole life of the community disrupted for days.

In the year of Laval's arrival, the Church prohibited the sale of spirits to the Indians. This led to resentment on the part of both Indians and traders, the latter insisting that if furs were to be kept coming into the colony then brandy must be sold. The economic argument fell before the moral one, as far as Laval was concerned. Continuing public debauches led him, in 1660, to threaten all liquor traffickers with excommunication; the Governor backed him up, adding the death penalty for good measure. Nevertheless, when Father Lalemant intervened on behalf of a woman caught selling a bottle to some Indians, d'Avaugour relented and then, in exasperation, declared: 'Since selling *eau de vie* is not punishable for this woman, it shall not be for anyone.' The Governor could not be prevailed upon to retract and the result was a general revolt by the traders against the Church's prohibition. Laval's action had been prompted by the murder of a Frenchman called Desjardins by an Indian during a drunken brawl. The ordinance forbade all persons in Ville Marie to sell, give, or trade intoxicating drinks – a challenge to d'Avaugour to return to his own earlier position.

The matter came to a head when Laval journeyed to France and placed the issue before the King. He was successful. D'Avaugour was recalled and the liquor traffic was prohibited by royal edict. Yet prohibition was no easier to enforce then than it has been since. Various compromises were attempted, but strong drink remained a significant factor in the fur trade. In a day when the trade was anything but reliable and when the English were always ready with rum if there was no French brandy, economics won the day.

If sometimes they were disagreeable when drunk, the Indians – the Iroquois, at least – were still too often lethal when sober. The uneasy peace that had prevailed during Maisonneuve's visit to France in 1655–7 was largely the result of the Iroquois's preoccupation with their traditional Mohican and Andaste enemies to the south. But by 1658 the Indian Confederacy had resumed its harrying tactics against New France. During that summer they raided Montreal, Quebec, and Trois Rivières in some strength. They were repelled at the defences, but a number of Frenchmen were killed or taken prisoner. D'Argenson, now Governor, showed an initiative which had been lacking in some of his predecessors, and his 'forward' policy resulted in another temporary peace with the Mohawk, who remained the most aggressive of the Five Nations against New France. There was an exchange of prisoners, but even the agreement failed to stop entirely the prowling of small bands of hostile braves inside the colony.

In 1660, in the spring, the Iroquois made plans for a resumption of hostilities against the French on a grand scale. Even before this their guerilla activity had forced the trade canoes off the Ottawa to safer routes and this meant that Montreal's by now respectable fur market went begging. By 1660, Lanctot notes, the settlement was experiencing 'an acute shortage of furs and hence of cash just at the very time when beaver skins were selling at a record price of fourteen and even fifteen livres a pound in France'. Lanctot maintains it was the lack of money and general economic stagnation which encouraged Adam Dollard des Ormeaux, a garrison officer, 'a youth of great heart and good family', to hatch his daring scheme, which French-speaking Canada still honours with a 'day'. He would recruit a band of friends with the aim of ambushing small bands of Iroquois, as they descended the Ottawa en route to trade at Albany, seizing their furs (perhaps already stolen) and generally out-harrying them in the forest at a considerable distance from Ville Marie. Dollard, of course, was unaware of the return of the Iroquois in strength – an estimated 200 were silently moving down the Ottawa and another band of at least 500 were coming down the Richelieu from Lake Champlain to meet them. The outcome was the famous

and fatal stand at the Long Sault, near where the village of Carillon now stands.

There, by the rapids in the Ottawa, at the end of April or early in May, Dollard, his sixteen Frenchmen, and three or four faithful Huron and Algonquin were killed after battling the Iroquois army for a week. Rash? Probably. Tactless? Perhaps. The late Professor E. R. Adair of McGill University, in a stimulating piece of iconoclasm, once argued that inexperience in Indian fighting led to their deaths and to the desertion of most of the forty Huron who were originally with them in the defensively ineffectual stockade where the stand was made.

Whatever the case, Dollard's brave band did inflict heavy casualties on the Iroquois before being overwhelmed and slaughtered, and the enemy withdrew, not to return until the following year. Apparently hearing from a runner of the confrontation at the Long Sault, the larger body on the Richelieu appears to have turned back to Lake Champlain. Thus Ville Marie's harvest was assured. Otherwise, the colony would have been reduced to famine, if not put to the torch. Was Dollard, in fact, then, the 'Saviour of New France' or merely the victim of his own folly? One might equally ask whether the Greeks really won Troy from a wooden horse. If the importance of the Thermopylae at the Long Sault has long since become a national legend, possibly unjustified by historical evidence, what matter? They were also adventurers, and may well have gone to the Sault in the hope of waylaying groups of Iroquois and seizing their canoe-loads of furs. They were obviously unaware of the band heading down the Richelieu. Whatever the reason for the stand made on the Ottawa, Dollard and his men were of the stuff of folk heroes. In addition, their probable purpose was fulfilled in a way, too, for not long after the battle a fleet of canoes passed where the Iroquois would have been with a record cargo of furs for Montreal. In command were two other near-legendary figures among the early *coureurs*, Radisson and Groseilliers.

Nevertheless, the Iroquois were back the next year, 1661, and the next, and the next. It was in 1662 as they harried the fields about Ville Marie that the doughty Major Lambert Closse, Maisonneuve's second-in-command through many a hard day, was killed on February 6 as he covered the withdrawal of a work party surprised outside the stockade. Obviously the dilemma remained. Growth and prosperity required, in the last resort, something more solid than the ability to hold three or four fortified settlements. Neither the fur trade nor settlement nor evangelizing could proceed with any certainty unless the Iroquois were pacified.

Fortunately for Ville Marie and New France, this was apparent to

Louis XIV when he began to rule as well as reign. Fortunately, too, his great Minister of Marine, Jean Baptiste Colbert, saw not only this but also the way New France could be fitted into his ambitious imperial-mercantilist schemes for making France itself wealthy. In 1663, Louis ended the charter of the Company of One Hundred Associates. New France now became a royal province – a land with a foreseeable future.

5 Royal Rule: the Way Ahead

> Never were there so many intrigues and expectations in any court as while Cardinal Mazarin lay dying. Women with any pretence of beauty flattered themselves that they would rule a prince of twenty-two, whom love had so far beguiled as to make him offer his crown to his mistress. Youthful courtiers saw a vision of a new reign of favourites. Each minister hoped for the premier place . . . It was so little expected that their sovereign would take up the government himself, that of all those who had hitherto worked with the first minister, there was not one who asked the king when he would require his services. They all inquired, 'To whom shall we address ourselves?' and Louis XIV replied, 'To me.'
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> Voltaire, *The Age of Louis XIV*

Inescapably, one is bound to think of the development of the French colony on the St. Lawrence, and, in our case, especially of the settlement that is now Montreal, in the context of its parent nation, the France of the fourteenth Louis. Certainly the man who became Le Roi Soleil, the King who reputedly said, 'L'état, c'est moi', did rule. Yet if Louis, after the death in 1661 of his Cardinal-Minister Mazarin, kept the last word always for himself, he delegated authority and sought

advice. If he was formidable himself, so, at least in the earlier years of his rule, were his advisers. Further, he possessed a country which, in the words of historian David Ogg, boasted 'most of the human and natural resources requisite for national prosperity and peace . . . It needed only organization to develop the latent wealth.' Louis also had the devotion of his people, for they were 'long since disillusioned with political experiment. Nor was he deterred by any doubts about his capacity for leadership. He was convinced that justice and morality were on his side; and for his acts he was responsible solely to one whose position seemed not incomparable to his own; namely God. It needed only money to make the equipment complete. The money was provided by Colbert.'

Jean Baptiste Colbert, first as Minister of Marine and then as Minister of Finance, set out to design a policy that would convert much of the wealth of France and her neglected colonies into a purse for his sovereign. Colbert was an administrator par excellence: zealous, hardworking, thrifty to extremes, and a lover of order, routine, and detail. His personality was cold – he became known as Monsieur du Nord – but his drive was incessant and he knew the nature of power and how it was gained. New France fitted into Colbert's scheme of things as one of the key pieces in the mercantilist game which he proposed to play along lines already being followed successfully by Holland and Britain, and which, he believed, was fundamental to the prosperity of a great state. Briefly, this meant possession of a colonial empire as a source of raw materials for the mother country, as a market for her goods, and as a place of settlement for surplus population. Further, Colbert appreciated that a navy was fundamental to the development and protection of such an empire, and that a merchant marine was not only essential to its trade but also, as Holland had proved – and as England was more and more coming to understand – a prime source of revenue in itself.

Colbert's achievements along these lines were remarkable. Among other things they saved New France and, through its reorganization, established the foundation of the empire in the New World which at one point extended from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the western plains and from the mouth of the Mississippi to Hudson Bay. While Colbert lived, his policy of a self-contained Canada was, with some erratic exceptions, followed. But as Louis became more and more deeply involved in dynastic and imperial wrangles in Europe the impetus Colbert gave to the development of New France waned, and the policy of continental expansion in Europe won out with the sovereign, to the long-range detriment of the colonies overseas. By emphasizing the army at the expense of the navy and by rousing against himself Britain,

the Netherlands, and the Hapsburg Empire, Louis left his Canadian province under-populated and overextended, and thus highly vulnerable to a determined opponent. But, largely because the British, the obvious antagonists in North America, were either otherwise preoccupied or incapable of coalescing militarily, New France grew and prospered in its own way for a century without massive assistance from home.

However, the immediate impact of Louis and Colbert on New France was as salutary as it was on Old France. The colony was quite literally saved from extinction at the hands of the Iroquois. Its administration was reformed, its trade and finances reorganized, and its population increased by an intelligent immigration policy consistently carried through during the decade following the firm establishment of royal rule. Whatever its fundamental weaknesses, by the end of the seventeenth century French Canada was, on the surface at least, on the threshold of its golden age.

Before Colbert's plans for New France could be implemented, a period was required for the consolidation of his place with the King and, for that matter, for Louis's own consolidation. It was 1665 before Louis was fully master in his own house and until then Colbert's own position was not secure enough for him to do more than lay down the guide lines for Canada's future.

Even before the dissolution of the Company of One Hundred Associates in 1663, the pleas of the last 'company Governor', the Baron d'Avaugour, for aid against the Iroquois, coupled with his descriptions of the colony's potential once that menace had been erased, brought sympathy and the promise of a regiment 'in the near future' plus an immediate dispatch of a hundred soldiers and two hundred indentured workers. Unfortunately, d'Avaugour's initiative took a high-handed form and the result was a series of quarrels involving at various times and in different ways Laval, the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice, the Founder of Montreal, Maisonneuve, and numerous others. Even the Iroquois menace, still a constant reality, did not distract the leaders of Montreal from the struggle for power within New France. Laval journeyed to France in 1662 in a bid to end the chaos. It was then that the decision to make New France a royal province was taken and with it the order issued for d'Avaugour's recall.

For purposes of administration, France was divided into thirty-four provinces, or *généralités*, each nominally under a Governor and an official called an Intendant, who was the actual man of authority on the spot – the true Governor. A similar type of régime was decided on for New France, but there the Governor, as the King's personal representa-

tive, had actual as well as figurative authority, though his province primarily encompassed defence and 'foreign affairs' (relations, first, with the Indians and, later, with the Indians and English). The Intendant was to be the administrative and judicial chief in the overseas province. Throughout the period there was as often conflict as co-operation between the two officials – usually arising from personalities and clash of wills and personal ambitions.

In Old France, as they were to be in New France, the Intendants were men of the business and professional classes, officials of the *noblesse de robe* which provided the key administrators. In their provinces or *généralités* their word was law, for, as Ogg says,

> they had a general supervision over agriculture, industry and education; they saw that repairs to the highways and bridges were effected; they had a large measure of control over the municipalities . . . they assisted tax collectors, and adjudicated wherever there was a conflict of jurisdiction; they kept the executive fully informed of all that was going on in their province; they were billeting officers, police superintendents, sanitary inspectors and rate collectors; they could order a man to do a thing and imprison him if he refused; in sum they were the human agents who kept this vast machine working.

But in 1663 the appointment of an Intendant for New France was deferred, for the simple reason that Colbert, his authority not yet consolidated, could not find a man with the qualifications who was willing to serve.

To Laval went the choice of a new Governor, and with it permission to retain equal authority with him in the new Sovereign Council at Quebec – a move as much reflecting Colbert's preoccupation with domestic affairs as Laval's pre-eminence. The man chosen was Augustin de Saffray, Chevalier de Mésy, a converted Huguenot, and one-time town major of Caen in Normandy, a sometime friend of Laval's who had impressed the Bishop with his piety and apparent lack of worldly ambition. However, he proved considerably less than a malleable lay figurehead for the ambitious monseigneur, and their clash of wills was to stir again that very administrative strife which Laval had expected to end. Lacking an Intendant, Colbert decided to send one of his officials, Louis Gaudais, Sieur du Pont, to carry out a thorough survey of the colony's needs and potentialities and, incidentally, to prepare a dossier on the views of the habitants towards, among others, Bishop Laval. Yet Colbert's main concern was to determine the value of New France in his projected mercantile system with, as always, an eye to the enrichment of his sovereign.

Laval, Mésy, and du Pont arrived in a colony that, in 1663, was relatively free of Indian harassment; Montreal, as usual, was the exception. The Iroquois Confederacy was preoccupied with its traditional Mohican and Andaste foes in the environs of Massachusetts and New Amsterdam, though the Mohawk, the easternmost of the Five Nations, remained a thorn in the flesh of Ville Marie. The party of notables came to a Canada whose white population from Tadoussac to the Ottawa River was perhaps 2,500 souls, 800 of them in Quebec, something in the neighbourhood of 500 in Montreal, enough to constitute a village at Trois Rivières, and the rest in slowly developing seigneuries in a fairly continuous line above and below Quebec. Farming at Montreal was, of course, a highly uncertain proposition at any point beyond the short range of the guns of the fort, which were the only effective Mohawk deterrent. Thus, as the religious purpose of the founders gradually became secondary, it was as a centre of the fur trade rather than as an agricultural town that the outpost was developing.

In Quebec, Laval and Mésy appointed the first Sovereign Council. Similar to the Superior Council of the Company period, it was made up largely of Laval's nominees including, besides the bishop and Governor, five councillors, an attorney general, and a clerk-secretary. The model was the Parlement de Paris, a primarily judicial body but one that had a rudimentary legislative function in that it was sometimes called on to register royal decrees. The Council in Quebec developed further in this direction, though issues were decided rather by a 'consensus' formulated by the Intendant, who became the chairman, than by any formal vote: at least the shadow of an analogy to some modern cabinets. The Council was the highest court in the colony. Its rulings could be appealed to France, though this was very expensive, and was frowned on by the King as an unnecessary luxury. Also set up by the new administrators were royal courts of first instance at Quebec, Trois Rivières, and Montreal, each with judge, attorney general or prosecutor, clerk and bailiff – courts which were soon to become crowded with the naturally litigious habitants. The courts dealt with civil and criminal cases but they were far busier with the first. In a number of areas the French code was more humane than that of England in the seventeenth century, where property rights rather than those of the person were dominant. In New France, for example, there was no imprisonment, nor seizure of implements or cattle, for debt.

On the other hand, the criminal code was marked by the severity common to European countries, with torture the rule rather than the exception for recalcitrant suspects. There were no lawyers in the colony, or juries, and punishments meted out by judge or judges were severe,

though they could be mitigated by the circumstances as well as by the nature of the crime. Death, corporal punishment, the galleys, or banishment were the favoured punishments of local officialdom. When issued by the lower courts the judgments were subject to automatic review by the Council in Quebec. Lesser offences drew fines, or the public ridicule of the stocks; the more serious crimes led to torture, the wheel, or death. Hangings took place immediately after sentence and heads and hands were severed and nailed up in public as a deterrent – sometimes the right hand was severed before death. Yet, severe though the sentences could be, they were far from commonplace and were a relatively minor concern of the councillors.

One of the first edicts of the new Sovereign Council – it was registered on September 8, 1663 – was a ban on the sale of liquor to the Indians on pain of heavy fines or even banishment; that state of affairs was obviously unchanged, as was Laval's implacable opposition to the drink trade, furs or no furs. In general, however, the two years of Mésy's incumbency were essentially a holding operation, notable more for the quarrels between Governor and Bishop for supremacy in civil affairs than for any remarkable administrative accomplishments. The advent of royal rule was salutary in many ways, but it failed to define clearly the areas of authority and there was a continuation of the official bickering which had been endemic under the Company.* Nevertheless, the King's promise of a regiment to fight against the Iroquois and his apparent concern for the well-being of the colony was a decided fillip to the habitants' morale. There was ground again for faith in the future even if the present continued uncertain.

Mésy died in Quebec in the spring of 1665 even as his successor, Daniel de Rémy, Sieur de Courcelle, a soldier of some distinction and considerable impatience, was on his way out from France. More important, however, was the appointment of Alexandre Prouville, Sieur de Tracy, as Viceroy of all French possessions in the New World, with

*The affairs of New France at this time were nominally carried out by the Compagnie de l'Occident, though in fact the colony was run as a royal province. Colbert, following English and Dutch models, set up the Compagnie in 1664 in the hope of inducing private capital to bear the burden of imperial development as, for example, the East India Company did for so long for England, and as Dutch and English chartered companies had been doing in the Thirteen Colonies. Colbert's company was given the usual monopolies and responsibilities for the New World; in fact, however, wealthy Frenchmen remained reluctant to risk their money in such ventures and the major share of the capital came from the King's revenues. The Compagnie de l'Occident was thus rather a crown corporation under Colbert's watchful ministerial eye and was wound up after ten years. Despite the soundness of his intentions, Colbert was unable to achieve in a decade what had taken his rivals generations to accomplish.

a brief to set affairs in order in the West Indies, Guiana, and New France – the last meaning primarily pacification of the Iroquois. Now sixty, de Tracy had a sound military reputation dating from the Thirty Years War and a no-nonsense attitude that was what was needed, especially in a royal servant in the colony at that point. He came up from the Indies to Quebec in June 1665, bringing a fair-sized force with him to supplement the Carignan-Salières Regiment composed of a thousand men and officers, who had arrived somewhat earlier in fulfilment of the royal promise. The news that the King had great plans for the colony had spread through France, with the result that the Carignan-Salières had not only been free from desertions but had actually been swelled by volunteers before sailing from La Rochelle. With them came the first Intendant, Jean Talon, some four hundred workmen, and twelve young women as wives for lucky colonials. This preceded the later fixed policy of sending out marriageable girls of good health and morals – so far as is known those who accompanied the Intendant had at least the former.

Civil authority was quickly established at Quebec. The Sovereign Council was summoned long enough to register the new appointments and instructions, but confirmation of its membership was deferred until the end of 1666. For de Tracy, Courcelle, and Talon the first business at hand was the Iroquois, and they set about planning the pacification with a will.

Work was started on a series of forts southeast of Montreal along the Richelieu, the natural base of operations and line of defence, looking southward. In the winter Courcelle led an expedition towards Lake Champlain, but the cold and snow and the problems of supply were too much for the regulars, some of whom succumbed despite the best efforts of the 'bluecoats' – the colonial militia without whose presence the expedition might well have been disastrous. The next summer de Tracy made no mistake. The Carignan-Salières descended on the Mohawk villages near Schenectady, found the braves flown, and put long houses and granaries to the torch. It was calculated that as many Iroquois starved to death that winter as might have been killed had they stayed for a battle. The lesson was learned and the first genuine peace with the Iroquois since the days of Champlain was concluded. For a decade and a half, Montreal could develop free of the constant Indian menace, thanks largely to these forays into enemy territory. Behind this military screen Montreal continued to grow towards its true place of eminence in New France.

In civil affairs, the establishment of royal rule was the beginning of the end of Montreal's long-enjoyed position of semi-autonomy – and

also of Maisonneuve's tenure as its Governor. In fact, the very virtues that had enabled him to maintain the island settlement during the first two hazardous decades became an impediment to a centralized administration from Quebec. It was necessary for the Governor of New France to terminate the pretentions to special status implicit in the attitudes of both the Governor and the Sulpicians towards edicts from the colonial capital, especially when they detected the hand of Laval in them. Henceforth the obvious intention was that Montreal was to be integrated into the royal province in a clearly dependent position; Maisonneuve's prestige, therefore, became an irritant and, legitimate or otherwise, his removal inevitable. But the way in which it was achieved was, to say the least, shoddy. The Founder's successful antagonist was Laval.

To achieve his purpose, the Bishop, as *ex officio* head of all religious communities in the colony, revived transactions dating back to 1653 when the colony was in desperate straits and its very existence in doubt. At that time, Jeanne Mance had given Maisonneuve 20,000 livres donated anonymously by Mme de Bullion as endowment for the Hôtel Dieu. The money was desperately needed to bring out new settlers; in exchange, the hospital, which had no need for expansion at that time, received a hundred arpents of land against the future. Unfortunately, however, none of this was in writing because of the desire of the benefactress for anonymity. Now, in 1664, Laval alleged that Maisonneuve had in some way misappropriated the bequest to his own use and must repay the hospital. Maisonneuve's explanation of the circumstances and of Mme de Bullion's tacit approval, evidenced in a further grant of 20,000 livres, was ignored. Laval's influence with de Tracy prevailed, and Maisonneuve was ordered (in the form of a 'permission' from Quebec) to return to France. This was in the fall of 1665; the man who had made Montreal possible was never to return, though he remained Governor in name until 1668 thanks to the influence in Paris of the Sulpicians. He died in 1676 still challenging Laval's allegations. The Bishop, for his part, equally unsuccessfully persisted in claims to the Sulpician establishment in Montreal until his death in 1695. His successor, Bishop Saint Vallier, quietly ordered the argument dropped in the interest of the common good, a step that fell short of exonerating Maisonneuve, as he indubitably deserved.

It is a shameful chapter in the annals of New France, one in which de Tracy, Talon, and Courcelle may well have been as guilty as Laval. But their aim, at least, was to rationalize the administration. What they knew was needed for Montreal was an end to the centrifugal tendencies inherent in the whole history of the community. As an integral part of

the reorganized province, Montreal required a competent civil-servant-cum-soldier subject to the central authority at Quebec, not someone with ambitions for a private empire.

The man sent out to fulfil this function in 1669 was François-Marie Perrot; but he, too, turned out to be rather less than acquiescent. In the meantime, however, administrative, social, and economic development proceeded apace as Jean Talon reorganized the colony on the lines laid down by Colbert.

Talon was one of the brighter stars in Colbert's galaxy. He was Jesuit-educated, and had previously served Mazarin loyally. Handsome, urbane, shrewd, and energetic, he had been Intendant of the frontier province of Hainault for ten years when he accepted the commission in New France for a two-year term. His willingness to serve was another indication of the impact Louis's interest in France overseas was having, for no ambitious career civil servant would otherwise have acquiesced so readily. When he arrived in Quebec, he was about forty years of age, and he was quick to take affairs in hand and to transform them into the pattern that was to distinguish them on through the years to the conquest and, in some ways, even beyond it.

In his commission to Talon, which stressed the paternalistic intention, the King informed Talon that he considered 'all his Canadian subjects from the highest to the lowest as though they were virtually his own children' and instructed Talon to 'extend to them the benefits and felicity of his [Louis's] rule, as much as to those who reside in France . . . the Sieur Talon will study above all things how to assist them in every way and to encourage them in their trade and commerce, which alone can create abundance in the country and cause the families to prosper.'

Talon's first task had been to order the billeting, pay, transport, and supply of de Tracy's forces in the pacification of the Mohawk. That done, he set out on the economic reform of the colony, with the object of putting it in a position where it could provide for its own needs to the greatest possible extent. This meant ending total dependence on the vagaries of the fur trade, expanding the fisheries, and establishing lumbering, mining, and manufacturing, and encouraging trade with the French West Indian islands, a potential market for food and such items of the sugar trade as barrel staves. Basic to all this in New France was the need for capital and for population, especially skilled labour and men of managerial ability.

Talon visited the seigneuries, goading many of the more backward seigneurs into activity under threat of losing their grants if their land was not developed apace. Colbert set an emigration goal of 500 men

and 150 girls of marriageable age each year, and for some time this was met. In addition, officers and soldiers of the Carignan-Salières were encouraged to settle, and almost half did so on generous terms. Many became Montrealers and founded families there. Talon built hostels for the *filles du roi*, as the marriageable girls were called, but they did not usually remain in them for long. Natural increase was as important as migration, and those bachelors who did not marry quickly were penalized. As, whatever Colbert's intention, the fur trade continued to be the dominant economic activity, the lure of the life of the *coureur de bois* remained strong. Thus, until each new batch of *filles du roi* were married, bachelors were specifically forbidden to go hunting or fishing, or to engage in the fur trade. This brought about the desired marriages, but, in the long run, failed to curb the activities of the *coureurs de bois* and the illicit aspects of much of the fur trade.

Development continued under the seigneurial system though without the rigid caste aspects of Old France. In fact, many of the seigneurs lived little better than their tenants and the dues exacted from the latter were trifling beside the obligations of the peasant-farmer on the far side of the Atlantic. In the colony, in fact, as W. J. Eccles says in his *Canada under Louis XIV*, it was 'more a land settlement than land-tenure system, for its main purpose was to get the land settled on an equitable basis'. Concessions were granted to private individuals, the seigneurs, and they, in turn, were required to settle a certain number of habitants. Their relationships and duties were carefully defined; in practice these tended to work in favour of the habitants and were carefully designed to prevent land speculation, which had been common under the Company of One Hundred Associates. This and the fear of the too powerful personage were among the reasons why the policy of making huge grants to persons like Lauzon terminated; after 1665 the seigneuries were generally modest. For reasons of transport, they generally fronted on the St. Lawrence (and later the Richelieu and Ottawa), and the allotments to the habitants did so as well – generally about three arpents frontage and a depth of about thirty arpents. Mills, churches, roads, and bridges were built. Under Talon, individuals known as *capitaines de milice* came into being, whose functions went far beyond the military one implied. Chosen, usually, from the leading habitants, they became general overseers of common work projects, the men responsible for effecting orders from the central authority. In many cases they became even more influential than the seigneur, as the men to whom other habitants looked for leadership and redress of grievances. In that sense they acted as a check on the occasional overweening seigneur, for they were the district agents of the Intendant. The

notion of representative government was foreign to the colony (as it was to France) and even the old syndics in Quebec, Montreal, and Trois Rivières were done away with. If the people did have a true representative to speak for them, the *capitaine de milice* was he.

In Montreal, the seigneurial rights were invested, as we have noted, in the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice, the seminarians and parish priests – an outgrowth of the original religious purpose of the settlement. On February 3, 1663, the year the royal government began, Montreal was shaken by an earthquake and there were recurrences through the year until September: symbolic, perhaps, for the administrative transition was not without its tremors, either.

The Sulpicians received seigneurial title to the island with the winding up of the One Hundred Associates in March 1663, the Abbé Souart being the nominal holder. Soon after, as part of the royal reformation, Montreal received its royal court of first instance (*sénéchaussée*), as did Trois Rivières. Arthur de Sailly was named judge, Charles Le Moyne procurator (attorney general or prosecutor), Bénigne Basset *greffier* or clerk, and notary. Until this time, the judicial function had been vested in Governor Maisonneuve and in the Sulpicians, who were not pleased with the manner in which Montreal's semi-autonomous position was being challenged; their view is certainly understandable, for they were the successors of the Compagnie du Saint Sacrement (and that of Montreal) which had almost single-handedly carried the burden to this point. Further, they had a large financial investment of their own in the Montreal colony. Thus, they set up a parallel court, with their own judge, Charles d'Ailleboust des Mousseaux, and with Basset, their servant, as its clerk, too. As an indication of their continuing influence, this dual system of courts ran on until 1693, though only after three bitter years in which the authority and titles of the Sulpicians were challenged and minutely examined. In 1666 these were confirmed by the Crown in new letters patent, and it was on this authority that the Sulpicians were granted most of the seigneuries into which Montreal Island became divided.

In a report on the colony as a whole given to Colbert in October 1663 by Pierre Boucher, the Governor of Trois Rivières, some idea of the general situation can be gathered. 'The lands [at Montreal],' Boucher said, 'are very good and produce grain in abundance. Everything is going on well there: fishing and hunting are very good.' There were horses (these astounded the Indians on their first appearance and were known as the 'moose of the French') drawing ploughs through soil as rich as the best in France. There was hardwood – mostly oak – for the asking. Boys and girls were healthy and generally bigger than their

contemporaries in the motherland; they were equally reluctant to go to school. The more well-to-do could afford wine, the less fortunate drank beer. Most buildings were of wood, but stone was beginning to be used. Houses generally comprised one general-purpose room with a grain loft above, an open hearth for heating and cooking, a few basic items of furniture and the inevitable spinning wheel, and a musket or two for hunting game and Indians. Barter was the general means of exchange as specie was rare. Fish were plentiful – sturgeon, shad, pike, brill, maskinonge, and eels. There was an abundance of duck and partridge when the woods were free of Iroquois, and groundhogs were also hunted. Wheat and maize were ground in the old windmill just south of the original stockade. In 1664 the Sulpician seminary was completed as well as the first manor house of the Order on St. Paul Street. The priests used these buildings until 1684 and they survived until 1850, when fire destroyed them as it has so many of old Montreal's landmarks.

With the coming of peace with the Iroquois following de Tracy's expeditions, the serious development of the island of Montreal as a whole can be dated. The first recorded noble fief had gone to Lambert Closse in 1658. From 1665 onward, more and more were granted, one of the earliest being to René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de LaSalle, who was to become a great figure in exploration and in the fur trade. His fief was known as La Chine, and was situated on the site of the present-day suburb bearing the name of the explorer, LaSalle, hard by the Lachine Rapids in the St. Lawrence. By 1671 land was put to the plough at Pointe aux Trembles and at about the same time at Rivière des Prairies, where Champlain had celebrated the first formal mass on the island in 1615. By 1675 most of the island and its satellites had been allotted by the Sulpicians. Charles Le Moyne was one of the earliest South Shore seigneurs at Longueuil, his grant running from Varennes to Prairie de la Madeleine (adjacent to the present town of La Prairie) and including St. Helen's Island. He was also granted Chateauguay on his ennoblement in 1668 for the boundless service he had rendered Montreal and his king.

By 1668, when the indefatigable Talon made his first census of the colony of Canada, the population of Montreal was put at 584 souls – though just how many lived in Ville Marie proper and how many in its environs is unknown. There is considerable conflict in population data throughout the earlier period, and part of the explanation obviously lies in just what geographical unit was being described. At any rate, some of the migrants sent out by Colbert, including the *filles du roi*, were finding their way to Montreal. In addition, the hiatus of the Iroquois wars made missionary work feasible again, and the history of

Caughnawaga, the present-day Mohawk reserve near Montreal, dates from this period, when it was set up as a Jesuit mission. The first Montreal parish church of Notre Dame was erected in 1672 on Notre Dame Street, facing the present Place d'Armes. From this same general period dates the founding of other parishes.

More significant for the future, however, was the revival of the fur trade which followed the expeditions of Courcelle and de Tracy. For a decade, Montreal became the boom town of the trade and its annual fur fairs in the late spring, despite the side effects of the freely flowing brandy, were among the most colourful and, for a time, important events in the island's history.

The annual fur fairs staged in Montreal during the years of the boom were comparable to the great fêtes, or days of celebration, of much later times. Those who attended were drawn from every walk of life: from the élite of the town to the bronzed *coureurs de bois*, from the well-dressed local merchant to the rough-clad habitant, from the highly-placed local official to the soutaned priests of St. Sulpice, from the elderly citizen and his wife to the gay young blades and the gaily dressed *jeunes filles*. Nor was the fur sale a local occasion. Because of Montreal's newly acquired status, thanks in large degree to the continuing state of peace with the Iroquois which had come at last, buyers who had sailed the Atlantic all the way from the Biscay ports were on hand bargain-hunting for the much-sought-after furs which, later, would adorn the ladies of Europe. From the highest to the lowest, all were there. This was Montreal's great fête day.

Governor and Intendant were on hand before the day's trading began. To start off the proceedings a great outdoor assembly was held, the dignitaries on their raised dais, ordinary folk standing listening to the speeches or chastising their children as they tried to mingle and tussle in fun with their youthful Indian visitors. Close to the space reserved to the dignitaries squatted the Indians (who soon would be seeking customers), puffing on their pipes, listening to the speeches of the white man's leaders or to the oratory of their own chiefs. And as each Indian chief ended his address he presented a bale of his choicest furs to the Governor. The latter replied (obviously through an interpreter), giving thanks and speaking almost as an affectionate father to his children, speaking of the glory of the king beyond the seas and never forgetting to tell his auditors how fortunate they were to be counted among his subjects. He would also remind them that to prosper they must live at peace with one another, tribe to tribe, never omitting suitable reference to the great works of the missionaries who had come among them to make all this good fortune possible. In person, the Governor distributed

presents to the chiefs, trinkets to their squaws, toys to the Indian children.

Then came the great feasting in the courtyard of the Hôtel Dieu – bubbling cauldrons of stews made from the meats of all the animal species of the country (even dogs and cats, stuffed with plums and raisins). A gala day, indeed! The feasting finished, the day's trading began, and in all too many cases the *coureur* who had brought his goods to market received not much more than enough to settle his accounts with the merchants and others who had helped finance him through the working season. Then, of course, no matter what Laval and others might think or ordain as to the use of spirits, for many it became a night of brawling and sometimes of even more serious trouble.

Montreal continued to grow as an entrepôt, as a market and garrison town, and as a centre of what little education beyond lower grade school there was. But the fur fairs waned in importance as the pursuit of the beaver spread west and southwest of the Great Lakes, partly because of the shattering of the Huron nation, partly because nearer areas became trapped out, and partly, too, because with the Iroquois menace removed supply began to outpace demand, prices fell, and greater quantities of pelts were required for the same return.

Two other factors must be noted as affecting both the trade and the long-term security of New France. In 1664 the English took New Netherland from the Dutch, renaming it New York after James, Duke of York, and establishing what was to prove a highly competitive and aggressive operation on the southern flank of the St. Lawrence system. Six years later, another Stuart prince, Rupert, was given the English monopoly on trade out of Hudson Bay, and the company formed to exploit it was by 1673 a serious rival for the furs of the northwest, its post being much closer to the sources of furs than was Montreal. This, too, had strategic implications, though the competition of neither 'the Bay' nor Albany was felt seriously for some time. Nevertheless, this first Empire of the St. Lawrence was already being shown to be vulnerable.

For the time being, with furs again moving freely to Montreal by the St. Lawrence and Ottawa, it required no great insight to realize that the prize pelts could be bought by intercepting the flotillas of canoes before they reached the fair. Ironically, the first major entrepreneurs in this strange expansion of trade were royal servants whose right to trade for their own advantage was, to understate it, highly doubtful: François-Marie Perrot, Governor of Montreal from 1669, and Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, that swashbuckling romantic and careful conniver, twice Governor of New France from 1672, who saw in the fur trade the golden opportunity to recoup his squandered fortune.

Their clashes, and their eventual understanding, provide an amusing comment on colonial government – economic, constitutional, and even religious – in the days when communication with France took a year. They also mark the beginning of a new era of exploration in the name of the House of Bourbon which opened the continent south to the Gulf of Mexico and west to the Rockies. For much of this heroic story Montreal was the base.

6 Frontenac, Furs, and the Frontier

'There is nothing of importance,' says Dollier de Casson in the two-paragraph account of the affairs of Montreal for 1669–70. 'We will close . . . with the arrival of M. Perrot, Governor of Montreal, who reached here with M. Talon, the Intendant, his uncle, after undergoing many perils on the ocean both this year and the one preceding, when he was forced to land in Portugal where they were shipwrecked. As he is a very handsome gentleman, of good birth, his arrival gave us all reason to hope much from him.'

Good looks, family, and youth seem to have been the only qualifications of François-Marie Perrot, for this second Governor had been but briefly on the island before almost all the merchants and most of the citizenry at large were wishing the Portuguese shipwreck had been fatal. Jean Talon's influence and the blessing of the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice seem to have been Perrot's main recommendations, in fact – the latter displaying their favour by granting him in fief the island which bears his name today, that substantial satellite lying to the northwest of the Island of Montreal, where the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence converge. It was the ideal location for an entrepreneur in furs which, like many an official to follow, Perrot turned out chiefly to be, despite the fact that his status forbade him to hold the seigneury in

his own name. Perrot's main concern was Perrot and before long he had demonstrated this by making his island a base for intercepting the flotillas of Ottawa and Huron canoes, trading with them for the best pelts and often leaving the businessmen of Montreal a-begging for the credits they had advanced the Indians or *coureurs de bois*.

Perrot, of course, was too astute to manage the enterprise in his own name, but in Antoine de la Fresnaye, Sieur de Brucy, he had an agent after his own heart. Not only did Brucy use Ile Perrot to divert Montreal-bound trade to his master and himself, but he also made it a headquarters for the *coureurs*, most of whom were operating illegally, and as a haven for deserters from the Montreal garrison who were much more interested in hunting with the Indians than for them. Thus did Perrot quickly render his name anathema in Montreal with those whose profit he seemed to be subverting and more especially with people still bitter about the manner in which Maisonneuve had been deposed – Maisonneuve whose last concern was his own profit. Yet Perrot's best efforts at manufacturing his own downfall at the hands of his fellow Montrealers were foiled by the entry into the field of the new Governor of New France, Louis de Buade, Comte de Frontenac, who took over the colony's highest office in 1672 and whose superior authority enabled him to enter the trade on a grand scale, thereby indirectly securing the rehabilitation of Perrot in the eyes of those who had been his bitterest foes.

For a long time the name of Louis de Buade was written large in the Pantheon of French Canada's folk heroes, to a great extent because he cut an imposing and colourful figure in a colourful age, and because, an accomplished self-advertiser and apologist, he managed to 'cook' the record heavily in his own favour until, more recently, his accounts were examined critically in relation to some previously ill-explained débâcles, with the result that the lustre of his star has been much diminished. Frontenac, however, was a man of his time and of considerable accomplishment, heroic or otherwise. He was a member of the *noblesse de l'épée*, once the glorious chivalry of France, but now more often than not penniless and useful mainly as officer cannon-fodder in Louis's growing armies. Frontenac had commanded a regiment in the Thirty Years War and later served as a mercenary with the Venetians against the Turks in Crete, where his touchiness and choleric impetuosity had blotted his record as a capable professional soldier. He married an heiress of the *noblesse de robe*, a much-practised solution to penury in those days, but Frontenac's title held no charms for his father-in-law, and the new comtesse was disinherited. Nevertheless, she was an accomplished woman with considerable influence at court,

and when a successor was chosen for Courcelle the job went to Frontenac over the bid of one M. de Grignan, who also sought a means to escape his creditors and recoup his fortunes in the New World. When Frontenac reached Quebec he was fifty years old and determined that he would make of his capital a microcosm of the brilliance now centred about that of his master in France.

Colourful and impressive as he was, Frontenac served to antagonize more than impress during his first term as Governor. He wrangled for status with Intendant, Council, Bishop, and Church. He miscalculated the deviousness of the Iroquois and he seriously neglected the colony's defences as a result. This had serious long-run consequences for the colony's most advanced and exposed outposts, Montreal especially; but the immediate irritation in that community arose from his private war for furs with Perrot, which broadened to include a majority of the merchants in Ville Marie before the Governor in Quebec and the Governor in Montreal reached an uneasy alliance over the sharing of the spoils. As adversaries they were well matched.

The opening of the conflict centred on Frontenac's announcement that he would build a fort (and trading post) where the Cataraqui River flows into Lake Ontario and where Kingston now stands. The move was clearly a violation of Colbert's policy of a compact, self-contained Canada, where agriculture and the arts of peace could flourish and the fur trade would continue to be carried out at the fur fairs and not in the wilderness. But furs were a quick way to fortune; farming meant little more than subsistence. If Frontenac's leap into the wilderness was the first of many steps that led to an American empire that France was unable, or unwilling, to sustain, in the summer of 1673 it made good sense to a man whose purse was empty and whose debts at home were pressing.

Furthermore, the great Intendant Talon, the man concerned with Colbert's policy if anyone was, had gone back to France and Frontenac was for the time being 'the high and mighty lord', as Professor Eccles aptly calls him. As a means of checking the flow of furs to Albany (plausible), Frontenac declared, and to provide a protective base for the Sulpician mission at Quinte farther up the lake (less plausible), he would have his fort at Cataraqui. That its location blocked nothing, that it would prove a prison for its garrison in the face of renewed Iroquois attacks, that it would be difficult and at times impossible to supply, and, finally, that it would have to be abandoned – none of this could be argued with any certainty in 1673. But it was a convenient place to intercept the canoes, to trade with the vendors of furs, and to acquire the cream of the catch for himself. To the Montrealers, the

Governor's project was probable evidence of his intent to carry Perrot's schemes (and those of others, for that matter) another step forward. What specially angered the community was that Frontenac determined to do it at their expense, ordering a summer-long *corvée* (forced labour) to build his fort and requiring that the town provide canoes to transport the materials for it. Montreal was to pay double for being deprived of the choicest furs.

The outmanoeuvred Perrot was forced to climb down and ally himself with the very men he had sought to outmanoeuvre. He soon gained an unusual popularity by beginning to arrest men with *congés* (trade licences) from the Governor which he, Perrot, claimed could be issued legally for the Montreal trade only by himself. In effect, his *coureurs* could by-pass Montreal markets, but not Frontenac's. The Governor was not to be crossed lightly, however. He retaliated by provoking Perrot into a technical defiance of his superior authority, as he claimed, and then manoeuvred one of the Sulpicians, the Abbé Fénelon, into bringing Perrot to Quebec for a 'friendly' discussion of the issue. Perhaps Perrot sensed a 'deal', but not the one he received. Arriving in the capital, he was arrested and clapped in the dungeon of the Château St. Louis; for eight long months he remained there while the Sovereign Council sought to find appropriate charges. Frontenac, in the meantime, appointed one of his own men, the Sieur de la Nougère, as Acting Governor of Montreal with instructions to end the Ile Perrot operation and to safeguard those traders with *congés* from Frontenac.

Montreal's anger at the high-handedness in Quebec was revealed in the mass of signatures affixed to a petition circulated by Perrot's wife to protest his arrest and arbitrary imprisonment. For his part, the Abbé Fénelon expressed his ire at having been made a dupe in the proceedings by preaching an Easter sermon to a packed parish church in Montreal in which the object of his attack on the misuse of authority could not be missed – especially by René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de LaSalle, a young man on the threshold of renown and already an associate of Frontenac's in the Cataraqui enterprise. ('There were points of likeness between the two men,' says Parkman with unintended irony. 'Both were ardent, bold, and enterprising. The irascible and fiery pride of the noble found its match in the seemingly cold pride of the ambitious burgher. Each could comprehend the other . . .') LaSalle quickly sent word of the Abbé's sermon to Quebec, and there was nothing 'cold' in his report.

Frontenac ordered Fénelon before him on a charge of sedition, but the Abbé pleaded benefit of clergy. Further, a majority of the Sovereign Council felt Perrot's case to be a strong one. They refused to bow to

the Governor's threats, fearing the eventual royal displeasure more and voting to refer both cases to the court. Frontenac then ordered Perrot and Fénelon home to France. There Colbert upheld the dignity of the Governor to the point of keeping Perrot briefly in the Bastille, before reinstating him as Governor of Montreal and requiring him to apologize to the 'high and mighty lord' on his return. Fénelon was also sent back, though his hopes for advancement were now dim, for Colbert made clear his feelings against religious meddling in civil affairs. But Frontenac received his rebuff, too. He was told that he had exceeded his powers with the Sulpician Fénelon; in future such matters should be left to the bishop for discipline, the Governor restricting himself to ordering a cleric to be sent home if no other solution could be found. Finally, Colbert decided that an Intendant was required in Canada to keep the impetuous Governor in check, and Jacques Duchesneau was sent out.

With Perrot in effect vindicated, he and Frontenac formed an uneasy alliance and three years later the Governor at Quebec intervened on behalf of the Governor of Montreal with the Sovereign Council, stopping a move against Perrot who, the council claimed, had falsely imprisoned a judge. The upshot was a new intervention by Colbert with cautions issued to both officials. But their trading activity continued. By 1678 Duchesneau observed that Frontenac had become virtual master of the Montreal trade.

Actually Perrot and Frontenac were only extending trade practices that had already begun with the end of the Iroquois raids. Colbert's strictures on a self-sufficient colony, with emphasis on agriculture, lumbering, mining, shipbuilding, large families – even the establishment of a brewery at Quebec – may have been excellent in theory, but the hard fact of the matter was that virtually everything beyond subsistence needs in New France could be produced cheaper elsewhere. Whatever its socially disruptive aspects, the fur trade was the only consequential source of profits for both colony and motherland and a magnet for men of ambition. Thus Duchesneau, frustrated in attempts to carry out his brief, complained: 'I have enacted ordinances against the *coureurs de bois*; against the merchants who furnish them with goods; against the gentlemen and others who harbour them . . . All that has been in vain, in as much as several of the most considerable families in the country are interested therein.'

In Montreal, Jacques Le Ber, often cited as the typical pious colonial, was among the earliest fur merchants of consequence, eventually becoming one of the wealthiest men there. He was for a time associated with Frontenac, before LaSalle became the Governor's chief agent.

Another early figure in the trade was Charles Le Moyne, that man of many parts and founder of one of the best known families in Canada. He and Le Ber were partners, intercepting the canoes on land west of the town acquired ostensibly as seigneuries but in fact as private trading posts.

As, under various pressures, the sources of furs moved farther afield, so did the French follow: from Fort Frontenac at Cataraqui to Niagara, Detroit, Michilimackinac, the Ohio and Illinois country, the Mississippi, Lake Winnipeg, and beyond. Gradually their explorers and voyageurs drew the pattern of a western trade based on Montreal which was to be taken over by English and Scot after the conquest and expanded to the Pacific and Arctic seas, even to the Orient. In New France from the late seventeenth century the sophisticated trading apparatus developed in which merchant capitalists in Montreal grubstaked *coureurs de bois*, generally in return for half the peltry traded at the lonely outposts of the *pays d'en haut* (the unexplored and unexploited 'back country') or gained directly from the tribes with whom the *coureurs* sometimes lived, the whole under the protection of various trading groups based on Paris and flourishing in Montreal.

The trade certainly contravened Colbert's intentions and extended an underpopulated colony far beyond its resources for defence, but this expansion was the inevitable response to the economic pressure of the English at Albany and on Hudson Bay, whose trade goods were cheaper and better than the French and whose prices were often higher. So despite the Intendants' ordinances, despite protests from the Church about the disruption of family life and the undermining of mission work among the Indians, the men of the colony, with or without permission, continued to take to the woods and rivers by the hundreds. And so, at times, the labour shortage made it difficult to work farms properly and undermined other areas of Montreal's internal economic life, problems complicated by a sharp decline in immigration once the spurt fostered by Colbert during the first decade of royal rule ended with the outbreak of the Dutch war in 1672. Yet the pattern went inexorably on; fortunes were made, the continent was explored, and Montreal grew into an important commercial entrepôt.

As we have seen, the first term of the Intendant Jean Talon, corresponding to the defeat of the Iroquois by de Tracy and Courcelle, was a model endeavour to set up the basis of Colbert's compact colony on the St. Lawrence. But the magnet of the *pays d'en haut* had its pull on the Intendant, too, and he had taken tentative steps in an expansionist direction during his second term by encouraging advances towards Hudson Bay and into the upper lakes system by Jesuit missionaries like

Father Allouez and traders and explorers like Nicolas Perrot and Louis Jolliet, and it was before his final return to France in 1672 that impressive ceremonies of annexation in the name of Louis XIV were held at Sault Ste. Marie at the eastern end of Lake Superior. However, if Talon found it difficult to resist the imperialist pull implicit in the fur trade, Frontenac was personally involved in its profits; in the work of his most intrepid agent, LaSalle, the lives of the two men became inextricably interwoven.

René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de LaSalle, was the son of a wealthy burgher family of Rouen who had early forsaken a Jesuit career to pursue his restless ambitions in lay affairs. He came in 1666 at the age of twenty-three to Montreal, where his brother was a Sulpician priest, and was granted a seigneury known as La Chine by the Sulpicians. But his preoccupation, as the name China implies, was anything but agricultural; his sights were set on the *pays d'en haut* and what might lie beyond. His genius for exploration appears to have been noted by Talon, but the two men did not hit it off and it was Jolliet, discoverer of the Mississippi, who received the Intendant's backing. With Frontenac's arrival, however, LaSalle found his patron and was a key figure in the enterprise at Cataraqui. From this beginning came the long career of exploration that took him through the Ohio and Illinois country and down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico and into Texas. On his last voyage, in 1687, this 'greatest of French explorers' was assassinated by his own men on the gulf coast near the mouth of the Mississippi. In the words of one of his faithful lieutenants, Joutel, 'his firmness, courage, his great knowledge of the arts and sciences . . . made him equal to every undertaking . . . [but] all his fine qualities [were] counterbalanced by a haughtiness of manner which often made him insupportable, and a harshness towards those under his command which drew upon him an implacable hatred, and which was the cause of his death'. Yet the routes opened by this most eminent gentleman adventurer of France, this heir of the traditions of Cartier and Champlain, led from the Great Lakes – where LaSalle began sail navigation – through the midwest to Louisiana, studded with the posts established by him and such followers as the redoubtable Henri de Tonty.

However, there was conniving behind it all, for LaSalle received from Colbert permission to explore, which was explicitly denied others with equal claim, including Jolliet. And though he was expressly forbidden to trade with Ottawa, Huron, or other middlemen involved directly in the Montreal operation, he was allowed – 'to defray expenses' – to deal with the Indians of the west and southwest. Colbert's aims were to establish a route to the southern ocean and, eventually

perhaps, to seize Mexico from the Spanish; but the results 'doomed any lingering chances there might have been for Colbert's North American policy'. For LaSalle and Frontenac, Professor Eccles adds, discovering the mouth of the Mississippi was not an end in itself, but a means of engrossing the fur trade of half the continent. Apart from its strategic implications, the development of the Mississippi and Louisiana areas of the trade worked in the long run against the Montreal merchants. By the end of the century not only had the resulting glut of furs undermined the price, but with the establishment of a base on the gulf the *coureurs de bois* were no longer dependent on Montreal as a supply base. Not only would they take their furs downriver to Louisiana, but some also crossed the Alleghenies into Carolina to sell them to the English. The *pays d'en haut* remained a mixed blessing.

Meanwhile, however, while Frontenac and his coterie were engrossed in the western trade, the defences of Montreal and the upper colony were unattended. After de Tracy's pacification in 1666 the Iroquois turned again to the south and resumed their traditional war with the Andaste and Mohican. Their cause was helped in 1676 when the Virgina frontiersmen inflicted a severe defeat on the Andaste, whose remaining members were assimilated by the Iroquois. At about the same time the Mohican, a branch of the Algonquin, joined forces with the Confederacy – and thus with the English, with whom the Five Nations were now loosely allied. By 1680 the effects of these relatively distant events were being felt in Montreal. The island again became a target for Indian raids and it remained in recurring states of alarm until the end of the century. The first serious blows were struck by the Iroquois, encouraged by the English, against the western tribes of the Ohio and Illinois, which had become the key source of furs for the merchants of Ville Marie. The intention of the Iroquois was to destroy them piecemeal and, by simultaneously clearing the French traders from the territory, to divert its wealth to Albany. The French had to accept the end of their influence in the west or act to stop the Iroquois. They were ill prepared to do either.

Frontenac's first ten years as Governor came to an end in 1682. Though he had made some attempt to improve the decaying defences at Montreal before his departure, the efforts were far short of the needs and he left to his successors, la Barre and Denonville, the full force of the renewed Iroquois war and much of the ignominy for its disastrous consequences.

Lefebvre de la Barre was a veteran civil servant with a good record as a civil administrator that included a number of intendancies, but his military abilities were negligible and his lack of stomach for battle had

already been revealed during an expedition against the English in the West Indies. It was apparent that Paris had been lulled by Frontenac's reports on the well-being of the colony. Nevertheless, the new Governor quickly appreciated the real situation – one where he might be able to field at the outside 1,000 men from the militia and the Troupes de la Marine (the colonial regulars) against upwards of 2,500 Iroquois; adequate odds for a pitched battle, perhaps, but hopelessly in favour of the Iroquois in the guerilla strategy they were bound to use. La Barre appealed urgently for reinforcements from France, meanwhile seeking to temporize with the Iroquois who were already having considerable success in a policy of alternating thrusts and peaceful gestures towards the colony while knocking out the Indian allies of France a thousand miles to the west.

When reinforcements did arrive, they consisted of only 130 Troupes de la Marine, armed with 1,000 muskets, 700 of which were useless, and 1,000 swords, of which 600 were broken before arriving. The humiliations at the hands of the rampant Iroquois continued. With the fall of Fort St. Louis in the Illinois country, la Barre was finally forced into a campaign by mounting pressure from the merchants of Montreal. The result was a disaster. La Barre gathered 800 Frenchmen and some 375 Indian auxiliaries at Montreal in the summer of 1684 and, after in effect revealing his plans to the Confederacy by a message to Governor Dongan of New York requesting his neutrality, set out for Fort Frontenac. Short rations, an outbreak of influenza, and la Barre's indecision in the face of threats from the sachems of the Seneca and Onondaga, soon rendered the expedition impotent. Himself ill, la Barre permitted the Onondaga to dictate harsh and insulting terms, which included the removal of all Frenchmen from the trading areas in the west.

It was a complete loss of face and it virtually destroyed what little confidence the French allies in the west had. The defeat was further compounded by the arrival at the western posts of traders from Albany with enticing offers. The Ottawa and those Huron who were still acting as middlemen talked seriously of joining their old enemies. But finally the desperateness of the situation began to be realized beyond the Atlantic. Two hundred troops were sent out in August 1684, though without proper arms, and in the next year came five hundred more, this time properly equipped. With them came a new Governor, the Marquis de Denonville, a man of much sterner stuff than la Barre.

Denonville's first move was to order the rotting palisade around Ville Marie replaced by a new one six feet high. He and the Chevalier Louis Hector de Callières, Perrot's successor as Governor of Montreal, worked diligently to place the town, at least, in a position of defence. Callières,

at thirty-six, had already established his reputation as a soldier and was to play an outstanding role in the colony over the next two decades, both in Montreal and as Governor at Quebec. He was short-tempered and something of a martinet, but if he sometimes annoyed the merchants and people of Montreal it was military talent, not that of a diplomatist, that was sorely needed at this point.

By the spring of 1687 Denonville was prepared to take the offensive. He mustered at Montreal 832 Troupes de la Marine, 900 Canadian militia, 800 French regulars under the recently arrived Marquis de Vaudreuil, and 400 Indian auxiliaries, and began his advance to Fort Frontenac. There he seized some Iroquois who were on more or less friendly terms with the garrison and shipped them back to the galleys in France – an order which was later answered tenfold in the Lachine massacre of 1689. Then Denonville continued along the south shore of Lake Ontario in the country of the Seneca, putting some 750 of their braves to flight and for nine days burning deserted villages and food stores. At the same time, Daniel DuLhut, Henri de Tonty, and others acted against the Albany traders on the Upper Lakes. Denonville's campaign lasted for almost two months and eventually proved the blow that saved the western trade. Immediately, however, it failed to undermine seriously the strength of the Indian Confederacy; Iroquois war parties continued to block the routes to and from Michilimackinac and the results to the island's economy were severe.

Unemployment in Montreal soared and the streets were crowded with beggars, orphans, and widows. A smallpox epidemic broke out and spread all over the colony, killing something like a thousand habitants and soldiers, or about a tenth of the total white population of New France. Arms were sold surreptitiously or seized for debt, so that, despite the threat from the Iroquois, many of the citizens of Montreal were unarmed. Decrees from the Governor promptly put a halt to this and in future the men of the town were required to present themselves well armed for the defence of the stockade or for militia service outside. At the same time the rudiments of a social welfare organization were established with the formation of a poor relief bureau.

In Quebec, Denonville realized that the expedition against the Seneca had failed to achieve its purpose. A much larger, much better co-ordinated campaign was needed. Meanwhile, as Denonville remarked in dispatches appealing for more soldiers, only a lack of determination on the part of the Iroquois was saving the whole economy from being laid waste west of Trois Rivières. As Indian hit-and-run raids continued, Denonville and his Intendant, Champigny, tried to improve defences by returning to the original design of compact villages centred about

a fort. But the habitants persisted in their desire for water frontage and elbow room. Forts were built in the most dangerous districts but it proved impossible to get the farmers and their families into them until it was too late. Such was the situation about Montreal when disaster struck in August 1689.

Denonville had written that a hundred determined Iroquois could paralyse the upper colony. On the night of August 5–6, fifteen hundred of them crossed Lake St. Louis during a hail storm and darkness and fell on the homesteads of Lachine. 'Before the habitants had time to realize what was happening,' Professor Eccles writes, 'many of them were cut down. Women and infants were butchered along with the men, their bodies hideously mutilated. More were taken prisoner to be dealt with at leisure. As the houses and barns went up in flames, the terror-stricken survivors fled to the forts.'

Denonville, who had been hoping for treaty talks with the Iroquois at Montreal, responded to the first incoherent reports by ordering out a relief column with instructions to get everyone into the forts. Vaudreuil, commanding the column, insisted on following his instructions to the letter and let pass a golden opportunity to catch the main body of the raiders, most of whom were now drunk from victory celebrations. He locked up his force in Fort Roland at Lachine and, after already having countermanded an attack on the celebrating Indians, refused a sortie when a second relief party was ambushed near the fort. The Iroquois finally withdrew across the lake with their prisoners, and all that night the French at Lachine could see their fires on the opposite shore as the braves celebrated by burning prisoners alive, among other atrocities roasting and eating five children.

Early reports on the massacre put the French dead as high as two hundred, but later research indicates that about twenty-four men, women, and children were slain on the spot and that forty-two of perhaps ninety prisoners were never heard of again. The others either escaped or were freed or exchanged later. Fifty-six of the seventy-seven houses about Lachine were burned to the ground, however, and the terror continued through the rest of the summer and into the autumn as small Iroquois parties murdered farmers in their fields, killed cattle, and burned homes, barns, and crops. Unable to mount a strong enough retaliatory offensive, Denonville ordered Fort Frontenac abandoned and razed, for the garrison had become virtual prisoners as a result of the breakdown in communications and supplies from Montreal. About the only note of cheer in that grim season was the return of a party of Canadians, sent the previous year to the *pays d'en haut*, bringing some 800,000 livres' worth of furs. And shortly before, a scouting party under

DuLhut and Mantet had fought a sharp little engagement with an Iroquois band on the Lake of Two Mountains, killing or drowning eighteen of them and bringing back three prisoners. The latter were burned slowly at stakes in the Place Royale at Montreal by the mission Indians – a grim reminder to Montrealers of the fate that had attended many of the Lachine captives.

Finally, in October, long-overdue ships arrived at Quebec from France bearing word that King Louis was now at war with England. Royal dispatches suggested negotiations with the Iroquois, and, failing success, the undertaking of a renewed offensive – an irony compounded by a further royal instruction, written somewhat later, recalling Denonville. With the ships came a new Governor arriving for his second term – Frontenac.

Denonville's tenure had been salutary in many ways but his recall – actually, worn out and disillusioned, he had requested it himself – left others to receive credit for its fruits. The Governor had been quick to appreciate that only total war could finally foil the Iroquois: if they weren't crushed, New France would gradually be bled to ruin. He had also realized the need to deal with the English and had suggested the purchase or capture of New York, schemes which had been considered long before by Talon. But, lacking adequate forces, Denonville could do no more than wage preventive war, the failure of which he had predicted himself in advance. His effort had been intense and the impossibility of winning had worn him out and undermined his confidence. In the judgment of history he has been unlucky. As he was no self-advertiser and as the tide did not begin to turn until after his recall, he has been made a scapegoat by history. But, as Professor Eccles makes clear, he was not so regarded by Louis XIV or Seignelay, Colbert's successor. Under the circumstances, it is doubtful if anyone could have done better.

When Frontenac came back in 1689, seventy years old but still breathing fire, not only had the lessons of disaster reached Versailles, but the outbreak of the War of the League of Augsburg, involving England, formalized the hostilities which had in fact existed for some time between New France and the English Colonies, especially with the aggressive Governor Dongan at New York. Louis and Seignelay initiated the fumbling beginnings of a forward policy towards British North America which grew into the outright imperialism of 1701 when the Spanish succession gave the Sun King a proprietary interest in the colonies of Spain. The King and his Minister brought up to date the plan for an attack on New York put forward by Denonville and Callières, but hitherto deferred while James II was on the English throne.

It was to be the obvious two-pronged assault, one blow by sea and the other overland from Montreal by way of the Richelieu, Lake Champlain, and the Hudson – a concerted effort which the French were never able to bring off and which the British, after failures of their own, finally achieved in reverse in 1759–60. The obvious corollary to the plan of 1689 was that it would knock out the Iroquois by eliminating their economic base at Albany. Thus could the western posts and trade be secured and the English-Indian menace permanently removed from the southern flank of New France.

Sound planning was one thing, effecting it another. The New York scheme came to nothing. Atlantic storms delayed the warships that escorted Frontenac back to the New World until October, when it was too late, and the Governor soon found that the colony lacked even the rudiments for a serious overland expedition from Montreal.

Frontenac's second term, which lasted until his death in 1698, marked the beginning of the end of the Iroquois wars, yet more than a decade elapsed between his return and the opening of Montreal's half century of security. In that interval the town and its environs continued to be a target for the Iroquois and its people victims of the scalping knife. It also became as tempting a prize for the English as Albany was to the French. From 1690 to 1700 Montreal was very conscious of its vanguard position in the struggle for empire in America, and what peace it enjoyed was akin to that at the eye of a hurricane.

Despite cancellation of the planned attack against New York, Frontenac was still forced to act quickly after his arrival. The Iroquois's contempt for French arms had become open and their ravages of that summer and autumn had culminated in massacres at La Chesnaye and on Ile Jésus just west of Montreal. The Governor would have liked to try his old 'skill' in negotiation, but the situation had deteriorated too far for that. Envoys sent to the Iroquois were roughly handled and the Ottawa and other allies made it plain that their friendship could not survive long in the face of continued French weakness. At the same time, however, the French were prevented from mounting the sizeable offensive that was needed to seriously defeat the Five Nations. With war now official, Frontenac decided to try a campaign against the English, hoping thereby at least to reduce the flow of arms and ammunition to the Iroquois.

Montreal became the scene of preparation for a winter operation, a party of 114 Canadian militia and 96 Mission Iroquois auxiliaries being formed. Led by Nicholas d'Ailleboust and two of the Le Moyne brothers (Ste. Hélène and d'Iberville), they headed south. Some of the leaders were in favour of an attack on Albany which, they rightly believed,

could easily have been stormed. But Frontenac's orders had been to concentrate on the smaller settlement of Schenectady, obviously an easier target. The result was Lachine all over again, but in reverse. Surrounding the settlement in the dead of night, the French and their Indians slew some sixty men, women, and children as they slept, and burned the town. Though it failed to strike where serious damage could have been done – at Albany – the raid provided a boost for the morale of Montreal and proof to France's allies that her arms were not entirely impotent.

But the effect of the Schenectady raid, and two others against English settlements near Portsmouth emanating from Trois Rivières, on the colonies to the south was quite the opposite. The English determined on retaliation. They planned a two-pronged attack on Canada – one an overland expedition against Montreal and the second a seaborne attack on Quebec by a Boston fleet under Sir William Phips. In September 1690 a party of 150 under Captain John Schuyler came up from Albany and struck at La Prairie on the south shore across from Montreal. There they killed fifty people, mostly habitants but including some troops who were helping with the harvest. This was serious enough but it was far short of the overland blow at Montreal they had hoped to tie in with Phips's attack. The naval attack was equally ill-conceived; when Phips arrived at Quebec in October, Montreal was secure and Frontenac was able to summon Callières with part of the Montreal garrison to help against the Boston ships and soldiers. The colony suffered nothing more than a bad scare. Phips had earlier taken Port Royal in Acadia, but his failure at Quebec ended what little co-operation the New Englanders were capable of for a considerable time to come. Still, the winter of 1690–1 was a dismal one for the colony; fire destroyed the royal warehouse in Montreal, a combination of the raids and heavy rains had ruined most of the crops, and only one of the eleven supply ships from France reached Quebec.

Once again spring brought the Iroquois raiders. Large war parties swept down on farms from the western tip of Montreal Island to the Richelieu River. The Sulpicians' mission north of the town, though fortified, was attacked, as was the settlement at Pointe aux Trembles. Over a hundred men, women, and children lost their lives. In the summer the English attacked again from Albany, but this time a force of 260 New York militia and Indians under Major Peter Schuyler was caught near Prairie de la Madeleine by French troops under Varennes and Governor Callières and badly beaten. Callières had almost 600 Canadian militia and Mission Indians and, while their losses exceeded those of the English, the repulse was impressive enough to stop the

Albany men from trying to raid along the border again. No little of the success of the French irregulars lay in their greater skill in guerilla warfare. They had learned the tactics of the Indians and began using them with considerable success against both the Iroquois villages and the English. These actions helped to restore the confidence of the Ottawa, Huron, and other allies of the French, and by 1692 they were bringing scalps – including white ones from New York – to Montreal for the thirty livres bounty that the French paid.

In 1693 Frontenac sent raiding parties against the Mohawk villages near Lake Champlain, burning houses and bringing back some three hundred prisoners, mostly women and children. A detachment of 436 Troupes de la Marine reinforced the Canadian army that year and a new campaign was planned and construction of flat-bottomed boats for the troops begun, an activity which led to a request for a truce by the Iroquois. But a sound defeat, not talk, remained the real answer. The Iroquois's truce offers still came primarily because they wished to be free to concentrate on the western trade, and by 1695 they had secured an alliance with the Ottawa after vicious sorties into the Ohio country, where the French were too weak to respond. Not until July 1696 were the French able to mount a serious counter-offensive. Frontenac, now 76, insisted on going along with some two thousand regulars, militia, and Indians from Montreal. The Iroquois south of Lake Ontario burned some of their villages and withdrew; they still would not fight pitched battles against anything resembling equal odds. Frontenac and Vaudreuil divided the French force and for three days ravaged the villages the Indians had not already destroyed and then returned to Montreal on August 20.

This campaign, like others before, was no massive success, for it failed to inflict serious casualties on the Iroquois fighting men. But the nine years of more or less constant warfare both with the French and with the other tribes had taken their toll of the Iroquois. They had begun the war with an estimated 2,800 braves; they now had about 1,300. The French strength was mounting and with it the confidence of their Indian allies. Furthermore, despite the disturbances, furs continued to come to Montreal and a glut began to develop in France. Louis thus decided to cut his losses in the west and ordered all forts there abandoned, though later he compromised with the protesting Montreal merchants and retained Michilimackinac, St. Joseph, St. Louis, and the rebuilt Fort Frontenac. From 1696, the Iroquois began seriously to work for peace and, though talks dragged on for three years – and with them raids – an agreement was finally reached.

Frontenac died in 1698; completion of the Iroquois pacification was

left to Callières, who succeeded him as Governor. In the summer of 1701, more than 1,300 Indians from the Mississippi and Lake of the Woods in the west to the shores of the Atlantic in the east congregated in Montreal to sign a great treaty. Callières, Intendant Champigny, and Vaudreuil, now Governor of Montreal, imposed a strict ban on liquor. Speeches went on for days, with charges and countercharges, frayed nerves, and an endless debate over the question of prisoner exchanges. The latter was finally left until after a great feast, when agreement was reached. The treaty document must have astounded the ministers in Versailles, as it carried on it feathers, animals, and other symbols.

But the intent was clear: in any future war between French and English, the Iroquois would remain neutral. For Montreal, close to sixty years of intermittent terror were over. Thus the period ended in 1701 with French arms triumphant in America, with the Iroquois finally quelled into neutrality, and with the western trade restored. Montreal had become both the military and mercantile base for Canada and, as the metropolis of a New France that extended from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, it entered its golden age under the fleur-de-lis. Nevertheless in France the problem of priorities was arising – between wars on the continent of Europe, in which the aggrandizement of France was at stake, and development of France's 'Empire' beyond the Atlantic. In the end the people of New France would be the ones to make the sacrifices, France the one to lose the 'compact' New France which Colbert had envisaged.

7 Life in Pre-Conquest Montreal

From 1700 until the conquest, a Montrealer could go to bed at night knowing that, barring an unanticipated summons from his Maker, he would rise in the morning unharmed, his day free of the alarm bell, and his musket silent in its bracket on the wall. The treaties signed that year with the Iroquois, and during the succeeding months with the western Indians and the fierce Mohawk, guaranteed the end of the long years of raids which since the days of Maisonneuve had rendered life in the stockaded town uncertain, at best, and in the surrounding farmlands acutely hazardous. For New France as a whole, warfare remained almost a natural state of affairs, the outcome of the restless American expansion and also of a growing and almost continuous conflict between France and Great Britain for pre-eminence in the world overseas. From 1689 to the conquest, with periods of peace which were hardly more than prolonged truces, Frenchmen and Englishmen grappled on one

pretext or another until, with the Seven Years War (1756–63), it became clear that the issue was empire, that compromise was over.

For Montreal, however, the guns rumbled only distantly until the very end; clashes there were, raids and skirmishes, but in Acadia or Maine or Massachusetts or at the frontier posts on the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, not along the St. Lawrence at its junction with the Ottawa. The great battles, until the end, occurred in Europe or at sea. The regulars were seen more frequently in Montreal, but usually only as they paused en route to a fight beyond the dense belt of protecting forest.

For almost sixty years the town enjoyed such peace, prosperity, and progress as was to be had in eighteenth-century North America and during that time developed a relatively stable society based on agriculture, commerce, and the fur trade. If it was a cruder version of urban life in the Motherland, it was indubitably more virile.

How Montrealers lived, what they did, their economic, social, and religious affairs are our concern here rather than the alarums and excursions of the days of the struggle for survival. Life before the final alarm was not easy, but neither was it especially unpleasant for the times. The generality of people lived better and longer than did their counterparts in France, much better than in the many less beneficent areas of Europe. Nor did Canadian society develop the caste rigidity of the Old World, whatever the hopes of the arrogant or vain. The frontier began a league or two away and that frontier dictated qualities of sturdy independence to those who would survive and prosper, even within Montreal's flimsy walls; for those who met the challenge there were rewards beyond the dreams of all but a few in Europe.

By 1720, according to a contemporary account published in Paris (the printing press was foreign to Canada until after the conquest), Montreal town was of a

> very pleasing aspect, and is, besides, very conveniently situated. The streets are well laid out and the houses well built. The beauty of the country around it, and of its prospects, inspires a certain cheerfulness of which everybody is perfectly sensible. It is not fortified, only a simple palisade, with bastions, and in very indifferent condition, with a sorry redoubt, in a small spot, which serves as a sort of outwork, and terminates in a gentle declivity, at the end of which is a small square, which is all the defence it has.

Thirty years later, in 1749, came a most distinguished visitor from abroad, the Swedish naturalist and traveller, Peter Kalm, to whose pen we owe some of the most apt observations of the mores and folkways

of the New World, both French and English. In Montreal he was roundly fêted by the Comte de la Galissonière, the administrator or acting governor of the colony, and by the second Marquis de Vaudreuil, the Canadian-born Governor of Montreal and later the last Viceroy of New France. Kalm was impressed.

He wrote that he found a 'city' well fortified (work on the stone walls was begun in 1722), though its extent was such that a much larger garrison than was available would have been needed for a serious defence against a formal seige by professional troops. After describing the general situation, with the St. Lawrence on one side and a deep water-filled ditch along the other, Kalm notes the 'several churches and colleges' and

> some of the houses . . . built of stone, but most of them are timber, though very neatly built. Each of the better sort of house has a door towards the street, with a seat on each side of it, for amusement and recreation in the evening. The gates of the town are numerous, there being five on the river side. The governor-general, when he is here, resides in the castle which is hired from the Vaudreuil family.

'Within the walls,' continues Kalm, 'is a nunnery and without is a half a one [that of the Grey Sisters], for though the latter is quite ready, it has not been confirmed by the Pope. . . . Every Friday is market day, when the country people come to town with provisions, and those who want them must supply themselves on that day, because it is the only market day of the week [actually there were more often two]. Numbers of Indians may be seen trying to sell furs and bead-work.' The proceeds from the latter – though Kalm did not say so – might well have been spent in one of the 'Indian' taverns with, often, horrendous results, recalling for the older people the wantonness of the Indian wars.

'The priests,' Kalm wrote, 'have a mill near the town, and receive one-fourth the grain brought to be ground. Of this the miller receives one-third as his share, and by agreement with the inhabitants, they are obliged to get all their corn [wheat] ground in this mill or at one of the other mills owned by the priests.' The Sulpicians were, of course, the seigneurs of Montreal, with all the accompanying rights and obligations, though these relationships were undoubtedly more complex and less obvious in a commercial town than in the surrounding villages and on the farms stretching for miles along the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu.

The walled town of the 1740s and 1750s took in roughly what is known now as 'Old Montreal', an oblong rather less than a mile in length from the Recollets' Gate in the west (today's McGill Street) to the

St. Martin, or Quebec, Gate in the east (Place Viger) and rather more than a quarter of a mile across at the widest point where Place d'Armes is today. The northern flank beyond the wall was protected by St. Martin's stream, a strip of swamp bisected by a brook along what is now Craig Street. The southern flank was bounded by the St. Lawrence and its small tributary, the St. Peter, which entered about where the Lachine Canal does now. The streams of St. Peter and St. Martin were joined by the west wall of the town with its ditch and hence began the narrow ridge of Upper Town which carried Notre Dame Street from the Recollets' Gate to the Citadel, a blockhouse on the eastern height whose guns commanded the approaching thoroughfares. Lower Town, the commercial district of the waterfront, ran along St. Paul Street beside the common land of the river-bank, a huddle of mostly wooden buildings containing shops, tiny manufactories, and homes from the west wall to the Quebec Gate where the fortifications narrowed to a bare two hundred yards. Within the walls were a dozen other narrow streets intersecting or joining the two main thoroughfares, more or less at right angles, with here and there short roadways running parallel for a block or two.

Outside the walls, where once the habitant moved at his own risk, the woods had long since been cleared, and fields and pastureland spread towards the mountain and in either direction along the river towards Pointe aux Trembles on the Quebec road and to Lachine at the head of its cataracts in the southwest.

Clusters of houses and outbuildings formed suburbs to the east, north, and west. Far away on the Rivière des Prairies, at the Lake of Two Mountains, along the south shore of the St. Lawrence to the Richelieu and beyond, and south along the banks of that 'River of the Iroquois' of other days were rows of farms running back from the water highways. Eighteenth-century Canada, in fact, resembled a number of long main streets – that to the east being almost a continuous village from Montreal through Trois Rivières to Quebec and beyond. Unlike those in Europe, the farmers did not concentrate in compact villages and go out each day to their fields; the habitant was jealous of his own strip and he lived on it as well as working it.

At the turn of the century about 1,500 people lived in Montreal. By 1713, when the War of the Spanish Succession (Queen Anne's War) was over and a period of thirty years of peace with Britain had begun, there were probably another thousand. Thenceforth population growth was steady, though far short of that in the English colonies to the south. There, migration from Britain and Europe continued, while in New France the population increase was almost entirely natural, new

adult arrivals being mostly officials, soldiers, and others essentially transient. In 1741 an inquiry showed 500 houses in Montreal and by 1754 the population was about 4,000. Among these were 60 well-to-do merchants, 100 lesser merchants or master tradesmen, and 540 day labourers. By 1760 the population was about 5,000. Allowing for troops, officials, and others who left at the time of the English occupation, the numbers in the city have been put as high as 7,500 in the last years of French rule. The main centres of the English colonies – Boston, New York, Philadelphia – were each double that, or more.

Between New France and the Thirteen Colonies mere numbers were not a deciding yardstick until the very end, as the English colonials seldom acted in concert and in the case of Canada, once the Iroquois had agreed to neutrality, the forest barrier kept Montrealer and English colonist separated. The population of New France was about 18,000 in 1713 and 65,000 at the conquest; that of the Thirteen Colonies 360,000 and 1,600,000, respectively. Once Louis XIV had turned his eyes away from the New World after Colbert's death, migration from Old France to New virtually ceased.

In 1721 there were about 250 buildings within Montreal's walls, most of them of wood with tin roofs because of the ever-present threat of fire, a recurring disaster throughout the French period and well into the English. Fires often got out of hand and, on a number of occasions, destroyed half the town. They took away such notable landmarks as the Hôtel Dieu and the Bonsecours Chapel, the former having been built and rebuilt four times before it was moved out of the Old Town in 1861, and the latter rebuilt in one way or another on its original site on several occasions.

In eighteenth-century Lower Town many of the buildings along St. Paul and the intersecting streets contained shops or other public places on the ground floor with living quarters above or behind. Tradesmen, merchants, and working people lived in these places near the water, officialdom and officers of the garrison in Upper Town. Also in Lower Town was the market square (Place Royale), the royal magazine, and Hôtel Dieu. In Upper Town was the Recollets' Convent and the complex of Jesuit buildings, including their church and gardens located about where the present City Hall stands. On what is now Place d'Armes stood the parish church and, close by, the Sulpician Seminary, part of whose buildings remain adjacent to the nineteenth-century Notre Dame Church. The Seminary had extensive gardens in the rear and there was an ornate garden in the classical style in front of that showplace of the town, the Château Vaudreuil, farther east at the foot of what is now Jacques Cartier Square. Near by was the Château de Ramezay, built in

1705 and now the museum of Montreal under the French régime and the only existing example of a gentleman's house of the period. South-east by the river was Bonsecours Chapel and east again the Citadel.

Outside the walls to the southwest below St. Peter's stream was the hospital of the Frères Charon (the first general hospital, with a chequered early history) and the house built by Governor Callières. Well to the north and west in the neighbourhood of present Atwater Avenue and Sherbrooke Street was the Indian mission school of the Sulpicians, a fortified place whose Martello towers still stand in the grounds of the Collège de Montréal.

The town had been ordered surveyed by Dollier de Casson, the superior of the Sulpicians, and the streets ran generally true. St. James and St. Paul, at least, were of reasonable width. But most of the thoroughfares were only too often next to impassable because of mud, slush, and mire compounded by the refuse thrown from the houses despite ordinances forbidding it. Pigs and other livestock wandered and rooted among the filth and people going to or leaving church in their Sunday best often had to move sharply to avoid being jostled by carriages or horsemen jousting for the right of way. Montreal's traffic problem obviously is not new. Among the myriad ordinances were those forbidding pigs and livestock in the streets, but these too were ignored to the point where the Intendant finally declared pigs fair game, and their carcasses the property of the successful hunter.

Children and grown-ups sometimes added to pedestrian hazards by sliding in the streets in winter. An ordinance of 1748 forbade these sports and children could be imprisoned for its violation, pending payment of a stiff fine of ten livres by their parents. The fine for 'speeding' in a carriage or galloping a horse could be double that. From the accumulation of these early 'by-laws' one gets an impression of policing that was at best good-humoured and generally lax. The picture of the bustling town which they evoke is one where life must have seemed at times like a free-for-all. (Time has not changed the character of this fascinating city as much as most people believe.)

Still very much present were the Indians who, though less *sauvage* since the treaty days, nevertheless added greatly to the general colour of the town. The days when they roasted captives over a slow fire were long past, as were those of the great fur fairs (though some door-to-door bartering continued). Now the Indian came in his role as valued auxiliary against 'les Bostonnais', to receive presents in token of the alliance, to confer at length and in great solemnity with the authorities – or, quite often, simply to go on a spree.

Some of the Indians paraded the streets in little more than a fig-leaf,

though as proud in their bearing as any grand seigneur in silks, lace, and a flowing wig. The numerous 'Christian' Indians made the concession of wearing a European-style shirt which, white when new, testified to the Indians' contempt for bathing by gradually darkening until it became a greasy dark grey or black. Hair styles were another remarkable feature. Some of the Indians shaved part of the head, others combed hair back on one side and forward on the other and still others tied it tightly in the form of a plume. Some smeared their ears white and painted their faces blue, vermilion, or black – or a combination of these and other colours. The Abenaki, who remained the scourge of the colonists in New England but had become peaceful visitors to Montreal, wore small caps embroidered with beads. Outlandish much of it must have seemed to a visitor from abroad, and outlandish it often became in terms of behaviour when *les sauvages* had been testing the beverages of the nine taverns permitted to serve them.

The eighteenth-century historian Father Charlevoix says that as late as 1721 Indian flotillas still arrived at Montreal, but infrequently. They had ceased to be an important factor in the fur trade which, since the treaty of peace with the Iroquois, was conducted in the *pays d'en haut* from forts and storehouses. Charlevoix, however, had a lot to say about the behaviour of intoxicated Indians, an indication that the drinking problem continued to harass Montreal through the years of peace and prosperity and, in fact, on into the English period. It remained the source of floods of edicts from the Intendant and from the clergy, but success in curbing drunken outbursts was never more than limited and temporary.

Charlevoix records that during a stay in Montreal in 1721 the streets were sometimes the stage for the most shocking brawling, spectacles of 'husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, children, brothers and sisters seizing one another by the throats, tearing . . . one another by the ears and worrying one another with their teeth like so many enraged wolves. The air resounded during the night with their cries and howlings which were more horrible than those with which wild beasts affright the woods.' One result of this debauchery was that the remaining Recollet Fathers finally moved their mission out of the town to the shores of the Lake of Two Mountains, well to the northwest.

In 1710 the Intendant had made one of the more stouthearted bids to bring the problem of Indians and alcohol under control once for all. He issued an edict limiting to ten the number of premises licensed to sell spirits to Europeans, and then only until nine o'clock in the evening. Sales to Indians in these taverns meant instant loss of licence. However, other establishments were allowed to serve the Indians beer 'in moder-

ate amounts'. Nine such places were designated. Each was instructed to limit its customers to members of a single tribe, for it was essential to keep the tribes apart when they were on a spree. The Indians were not permitted to take drink off the premises and the publican was instructed to provide lodging when necessary. These 'Indian' taverns were permitted to sell brandy or other spirits only to the French.

The intention of these regulations was apparent and, had they been carried out to the letter, might have had the desired effect of controlling debauchery and brawling. But the bootleg sale of brandy to the Indians continued, and the tavern-keepers must have reaped a splendid profit, for an expression to describe what a European regarded as too weak a drink came into being: 'Damn you, you have served me from the savages' barrel.'

These were only some of the more striking aspects of the lackadaisical approach to edicts and ordinances from the capital, Quebec, in so far as they concerned the peccadilloes of a frontier society. The Intendant and the Viceroy usually visited Montreal only once a year. It would appear that instructions from on high were regarded as meddling in areas better understood by the Montréalais than by the King's officers far off in Quebec. Constant edicts were issued, for example, to curb the flourishing smuggling trade which went on between Montreal and Albany even in times of war, but these efforts, too, were frustrated by simple economics: the English paid more for peltry and, besides, the manufactured goods they gave in exchange were preferred by the Indians because of their superior quality. Furthermore, when in wartime the ships from France failed to get through, shortages in the Montreal shops could be made good from Albany without much difficulty. 'Not to be tolerated' instructions came through frequently from the Minister in France to the Intendant in Quebec to the Governor in Montreal; but business was business and France even more remote than Quebec. Montreal retained many of the freebooting aspects of the frontier town beneath the veneer of its European-imitating high society. Let Quebec concern itself with the proprieties! (Besides, in those days wars in Europe itself never resulted in eliminating trade between citizens of belligerent states.)

Activity in Montreal began early in the morning, especially on market days (these were generally Tuesdays and Fridays unless produce was short, Peter Kalm to the contrary). Habitants from the rich farms around the town would arrive before dawn to open stalls or to line up carts in the Place d'Armes (the present Place Royale). The public was given first look, with innkeepers and restaurateurs barred from buying until

eight o'clock. This was especially important in times of poor harvests, or when the disruptions of war made supplies short. All accounts surviving from the time indicate that the colony was more often than not able to feed itself and, after the turn of the century, had exportable surpluses of wheat and fish. But there was an excessive concentration on wheat at the expense of other foodstuffs, and it was not until after the conquest, apparently, that the better balance of English husbandry was introduced.

The diet of the average family was simple, but superior to that of the European peasant. It must have been at least adequate by nutritional standards, for the health of the Canadians drew favourable comment from visitors. In the ordinary household meat was served rarely – usually on feast days or special family occasions. But fish was plentiful, as were eels, and there was game, milk, eggs, the inevitable *soupe aux pois* (pigs were the most common livestock and peas were grown and dried in quantity), and pancakes or coarse bread or porridge made of Indian corn and such fruit as was seasonable.

Table manners were as unelaborate as the diet. Everyone carried his own pocket knife, the blade fashioned by a blacksmith and the handle often ornately carved, and this was the main eating implement. Water was the usual drink of the common man, though there was beer, cider, spruce beer, and sometimes brandy in which to dip the breakfast bread. Wine was too expensive for the ordinary Montrealer, but was consumed in quantity by the higher classes whose diet, and entertainment, as evidenced by travellers like Kalm and in the letters of Montcalm and others, tended to imitate the sophistication of the upper classes in France.

There was certainly ample fresh air and, on the farms surrounding the town, at least, hard work; the result was strong and hardy physiques and relative longevity. Mother Marie de l'Incarnation records that a poor man might have eight children who went barefoot and bareheaded even in winter and whose diet seemed to consist mostly of eels and bread – yet for all that the youngsters were cheerful and sturdy.

'Seen but not heard' seems to have been the common rule for the children of Canada as elsewhere in those quieter family times. The youngsters seldom sat at table with their parents until after they had made their First Communion. In better-class families the children ate at a low table of their own, but among artisans and labourers they took their meals at a log block which doubled as bench and mincing or chopping block by the simple process of turning it over.

The women of Montreal were described by visitors as surpassing their English colonial sisters in what are now the northeastern United

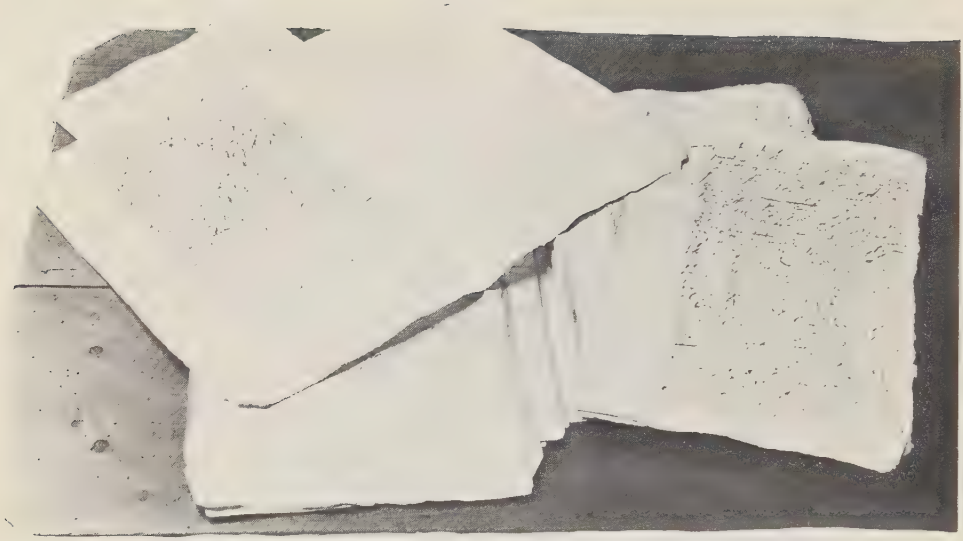
States, not only in vivacity, but also in such matters as household economy. They were no strangers to the strenuous chores of field, meadow, or stable – though that was a commonplace not only in frontier societies but also in rural Europe. The slavish emphasis on cleanliness of some of the Puritan colonies was not apparent in Montreal. Floors were thoroughly cleaned perhaps once in six months, though they were wetted down several times daily to keep the dust from rising. Various observers remarked that the ladies of the higher classes, at least, led gay lives. The men treated them with gallantry and spared them the more fatiguing work. They were generally comely of figure, vivacious, and often influential enough to obtain good jobs for their husbands.

Kalm writes that the Montréalaise was prettier than her Quebec sister, though less frivolous – fitting in a society whose tone was by nature more bourgeois.

> I have with pleasure seen the daughters of the better sort of people, and of the governor himself, not too finely dressed and going into the kitchens and cellars to look that everything be done as it ought. What I have mentioned . . . of their dressing their heads too assiduously is the case with all the ladies throughout Canada. Their hair is always curled, even when they are at home in a dirty jacket and short, coarse petitcoat that does not reach to the middle of their legs. On those days when they go to pay or receive visits (a scrupulous custom), they dress so gaily that one is almost induced to think their parents possess the greatest honours in the state. They are no less attentive to have the newest fashions, and they laugh at one another when they are not dressed to one another's fancy.
>
> One of the first questions they propose to a stranger [says Kalm in a vein later echoed by the English officers] is whether he is married; then next, how he likes the ladies of the country, and whether he thinks them handsomer than those of his own country, and third, whether he will take one home with him . . . Those of Quebec are not very industrious. The young ladies, especially those of a higher rank, get up at seven and dress till nine, drinking their coffee at the same time. When they are dressed they place themselves near a window that opens into the street and sew a stitch now and then, but turn their eyes into the street most of the time.

Should a young male acquaintance appear, says Kalm with a suggestion of Northern disapproval, 'they immediately lay aside their work, sit by him, and begin to chat, laugh, joke, and invent double-entendres; and this is reckoned to be very witty.' But there must have been something to be said for their gaiety, for the girls in money-grubbing Mont-

The old French port of La Rochelle is much the same today as it was in 1641 when Maisonneuve and his followers sailed from there for New France.



The contracts signed by Montreal's first settlers, now in the Hôtel-Dieu, La Flèche, France

Jérôme Le Royer de La Dauversière, a member of the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement and a founder of the Société de Notre Dame de Montréal

Jean-Jacques Olier, an important member of Saint-Sacrement and the Société de Montréal, and the founder of the Order of Saint-Sulpice

The courageous Jeanne Mance, from a stained-glass window in the Hôtel-Dieu, Montreal

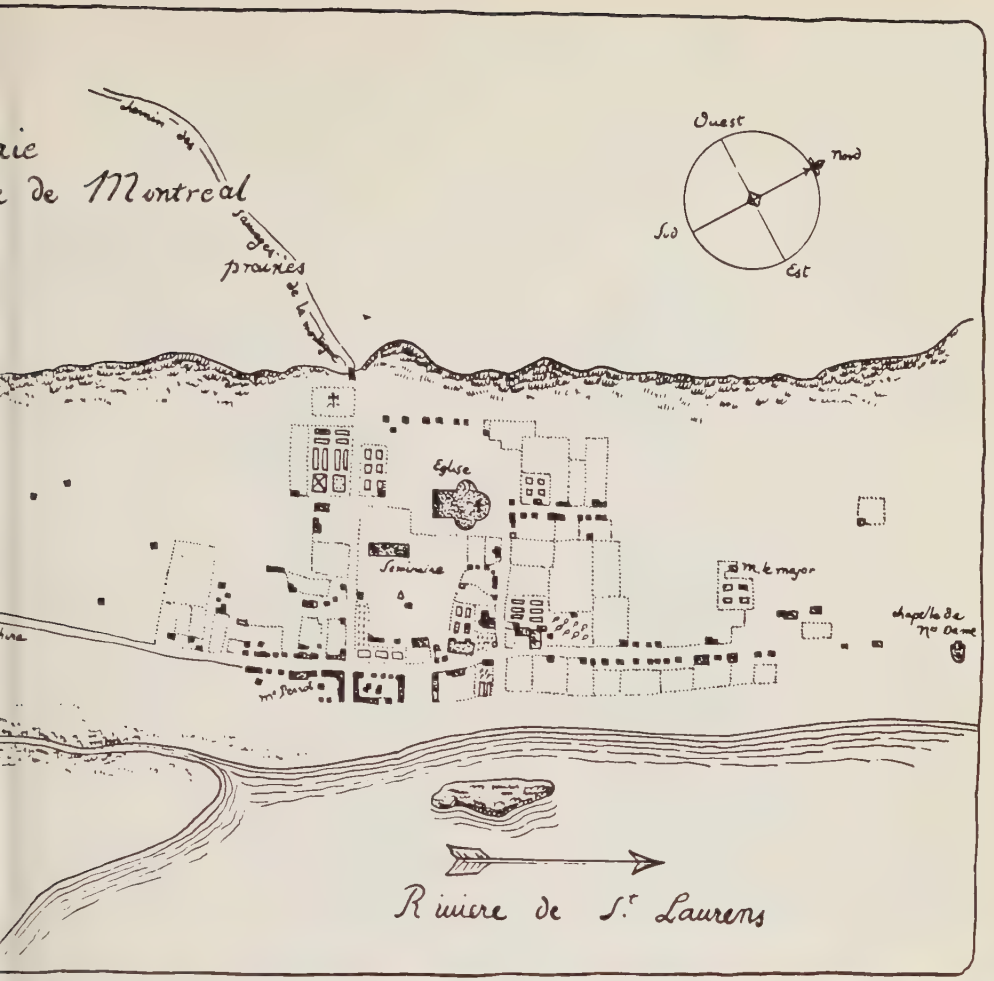
The recently restored original portrait of Marguerite Bourgeoys made by Pierre Le Ber at the time of her death

(*Above*) The statue of Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, from the monument in Place d'Armes, Montreal

(*Top right*) Dated 1685, this is believed to be the oldest existing map of Montreal.

(*Lower left*) Robert Cavelier de LaSalle meeting Louis XIV and Colbert at Versailles

(*Lower right*) One of the two towers of Le Séminaire de Montréal which was used temporarily in the seventeenth century as a school for Indian girls by Marguerite Bourgeoys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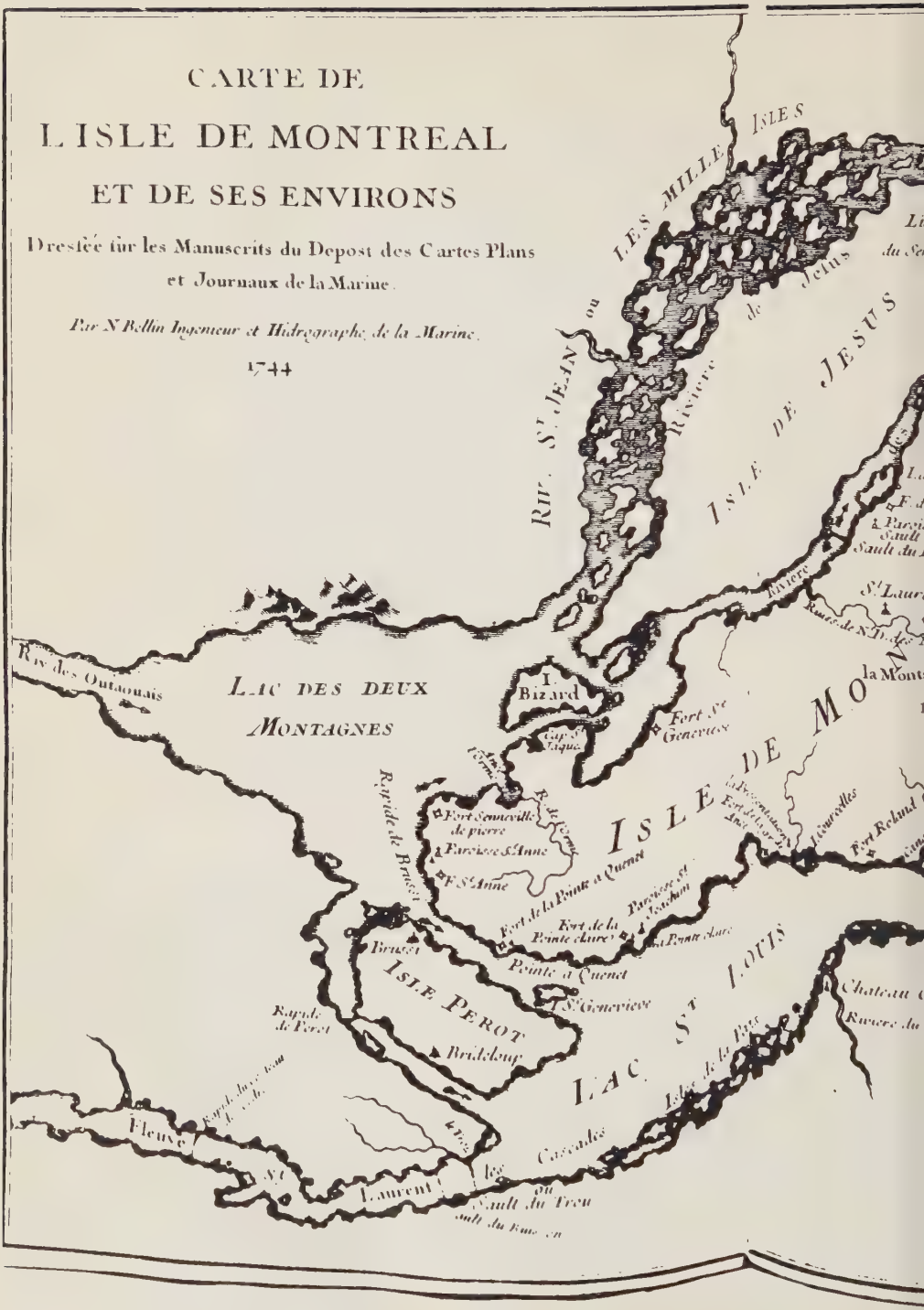
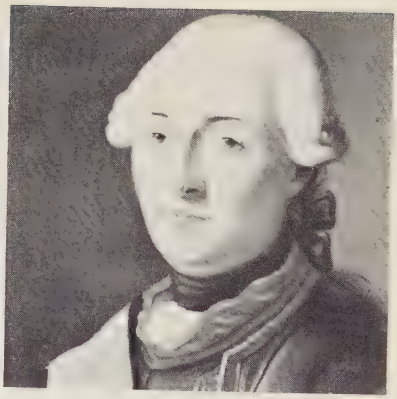
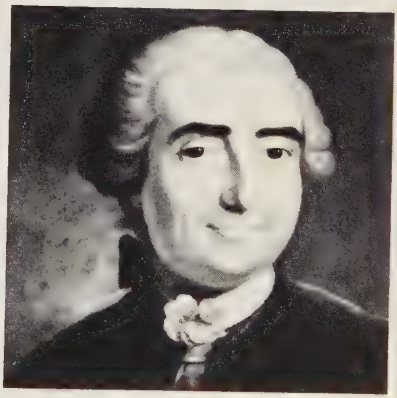


A map of the island of Montreal dated 1744



François Gaston de Lévis, who succeeded Montcalm as commander of the French forces in New France



The Marquis de Montcalm

Jeffrey Amherst, from a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds

(*Top*) The Château de Ramezay, built in 1705

(*Centre*) Built in 1698, La Ferme Saint-Gabriel is the oldest farm house in Montreal.

(*Lower left*) The old Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice, dated 1685, is the oldest building in Montreal.

real 'are very much displeased that those at Quebec get husbands sooner than they. The reason for this is that many young gentlemen who come over from France with the ships are captivated by the ladies at Quebec and marry them; but as these gentlemen seldom go up to Montreal, the girls there are not so happy as at the former place.' Perhaps such eligible men as did get to Montreal glittered less, but Kalm suggests they possessed their good bourgeois streak and that they were 'extremely civil . . . they take off their hats to every person indifferently whom they meet in the streets'.

Certainly there was a spirit of independence, of self-confidence, often of wilfulness among these pioneer descendants of pioneers – even if at times there was an aversion to building a society on sweat.

> They love distinctions and attentions [wrote Intendant Hocquart in a report to the Minister in 1737]. [They] pride themselves on their bravery and are extremely sensitive to slights or to punishments: they . . . make great use of spirits, so much so that it is hardly credible [though] those of the towns are less addicted . . . All are attached to their religion. One sees few criminals. They are fickle, have too good an opinion of themselves, which prevents them from succeeding as they should in agriculture and commerce. We should add to this the idleness which is forced on them by the length and severity of the winter. They love hunting and exploring and have not the rustic manners of the French peasant. They are commonly quiet enough when governed justly, but they are by nature hard to govern.

The words might have been written of those other frontiersmen then making their way through the Appalachian boundary to open another part of the continent in the name of a king from Hanover.

Two more recent estimates of these people and their civilization might be mentioned at this point. To Francis Parkman, the great New Englander writing in the late nineteenth century:

> An ignorant population, sprung from a brave and active race, but trained to subjection and dependence through centuries of feudal and monarchical despotism. . . . Perpetual intervention of government, – regulations, restrictions, encouragements sometimes more mischievous than restrictions, a constant uncertainty what the authorities would do next, the fate of each man resting less with himself than with another, volition enfeebled, self-reliance paralyzed – the condition, in short, of a child held always under the rule of a father, in the main well-meaning and kind, sometimes generous, sometimes neglectful, often capricious, and rarely very wise, – such were the influences under which Canada grew up. If

> she had prospered it would have been sheer miracle. A man, to be a man, must feel that he holds his fate, in some measure, in his own hands.

Strange, this judgment from a man through whose evocative pages resound the deeds of so many rugged individuals of New France, whose fate surely was in their own hands.

By contrast, the modern historian Guy Frégault writes:

> New France did not suffer under absolutism; for its citizens, hardly touched by Britain's Bloodless Revolution, the doctrine of absolutism was an old habit of mind to which they had long since learned to adjust themselves. To serve the king was an honour as well as a duty. . . . Since they were rarely consulted, men who were ready to die for their country at the first sign of danger showed an understandable disinterest in political life. In general it was enough for these sturdy individualists . . . to go their own way observing the laws when they were good ones, evading them when they were not so good, and opposing them vigorously when they seemed bad. . . .
>
> We must never forget that the public institutions of New France made it possible for a society to develop in which it was good to live, a vigorous society, and one that contained qualities that have persisted for a long time even in the face of almost hopeless odds.

The Montréalais of the eighteenth century were eminent in the formation of that society and were as typical of the qualities Professor Frégault mentions as any in the colony. Yet it remains true that politics in the sense of the constitutionality we now employ were foreign to this small town in a small society. In Quebec, true, there was the Superior Council, in which leading citizens appointed as councillors discussed the more important matters of administration. Yet the aim was a consensus expressed by the Intendant as chairman, not a decision by vote. From Quebec instructions were passed to Montreal, where a transformation might well occur without any official sanction from the downriver capital.

Montreal was the centre of one of the three administrative and judicial districts into which Canada was divided, the others of course being Trois Rivières and Quebec. These districts, or *prévôtés*, had their king's judges who dealt with the important criminal and civil cases according to the Custom of Paris, as modified by colonial ordinances and edicts. Decisions of these judges could be appealed to the Intendant who, with the Superior Council, formed the colony's High Court, and, in theory at least, could also be appealed to the King. There were also seigneurial

courts for minor matters, generally disputes between habitant and habitant; as seigneurs of Montreal the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice were empowered to hold these courts, though they were designed primarily to deal with the sort of dispute that arose in rural areas – Montreal's being the surrounding seigneurial farms.

As we have seen, judges could be extremely severe in their sentences by modern standards – though they were not especially so by the yardstick of the day. Further, by the eighteenth century the sort of arbitrary arrest practised by Frontenac against Perrot and others had ceased; the courts were not the stage on which personal vendettas were played out, nor the jails repositories for one's enemies *ad infinitum* without trial.

There was, of course, no municipal government in the modern sense. The Governor of Montreal was the representative of the Governor, or Viceroy, and as such might often be little more than a figurehead and the leader of society. He was also technically commander of the local troops, who were also the police (though there was a night watch). But, just as the Intendant was the key figure in the administration of the colony, so his 'men' in the urban hierarchy – the King's judge, who proclaimed the edicts of Quebec, and the procureur, or Crown attorney, who saw that they were carried out – were the real sources of municipal authority. Politically the role of the ordinary subject was nil in any corporate sense, but petitions were quite proper and not uncommon. Besides, in a town of a few thousand souls the views and interests of the 'natural' leaders were obvious.

There were minor officials in addition to Governor, judge, and Crown attorney – court clerks, bailiffs, notaries, and the *grand voyer*. This last was the 'roadmaster' who, in addition to being responsible for construction and maintenance of streets and such highways as there were (under the irritating *corvée* system), was also inspector of public works and buildings and of newly built private structures, especially with an eye to the prevention of fires.

There was some rudimentary legal training for young men regarded as likely candidates for minor official posts, like those of the assessors, or perhaps for eventual membership in the Council at Quebec. However, though sporadic lectures in the law were carried out by the prosecutors, they were not such as to qualify a man as advocate; in fact, a royal edict of 1746 specifically forbade the establishment of that profession in the colony. Such matters as the drawing of contracts were handled by the notaries. Justice there was, but it was quick, summary, and severe, and torture was not uncommon as a means of securing evidence against an accused. The fate of the convict was generally not enviable. A man named Belisle, for example, who had brutally mur-

dered a neighbouring farmer and his wife before stealing their savings, was condemned to have his legs, thighs, and backbone broken on the rack in the marketplace at noon. Then, face to the sky, he was left to die in agony as an example to others.

Punishment was exemplary, rehabilitation the work of the Church. In another case, a soldier convicted of sorcery fared rather better than the unfortunate Belisle. Flavert de Beaufort, described as a *farceur* who amused himself at the expense of the credulity of the poor, was accused of having profaned the New Testament and a statue of Christ by using them for illicit prognostication and also by burning the extremities of the figure on the crucifix. He was condemned to appear clad only in a shirt, with a rope around his neck and a torch of wax burning in his hand before the main door of the parish church on the first day of market. There he knelt and declared that he had profaned the Word of the Lord, after which he was beaten and whipped through the streets and finally banished for three years during which time he was to pull an oar in one of the royal galleys. In a day and a part of the world where life of the flesh was cheap, incidents such as this were more shocking to the public than a brutal murder. In this case Bishop Pontbriand ordered a procession of amends from the parish church to Bonsecours Chapel and two years later the incident became commemorated in the Feast of the Outraged Cross, which was celebrated each March 1.

Appeals, as noted, could be made to the Intendant and Council in Quebec, which also reviewed sentences. A soldier called Dufour, for example, had been condemned after a crime of violence to be branded with the fleur-de-lis, whipped, and sent to the galleys for life. A Council review decided the sentence was light and the man was to be hanged instead. Another sidelight on the times was an order of 1732 which curtailed religious asylum to fugitives from justice, especially deserters from the army; for disobedience a clergyman could be deprived of all privileges. Harsh as much of this may seem today, the incidence of serious crime was not high and most of the time of the courts was occupied by a spate of minor civil quarrels brought by the inherently litigious habitants.

The colonial government was responsible for defence, foreign policy, and such rudimentary administration as maintaining the roads, regulating trade, and fixing prices. Those myriad affairs now lumped under the umbrella term 'welfare statism' were the function of the Church and the orders – education, health, poor relief, social welfare generally. We have seen how the beginning of a 'co-educational' school system

was made under Marguerite Bourgeoys in the stable given her by Maisonneuve. By 1661 the Sulpicians had taken over responsibility for the education of boys and in 1670 the Congregation of Notre Dame, Marguerite Bourgeoys's teaching order, was set up and began to expand with schools outside the walls – at Pointe aux Trembles and Lachine, for example, and later on Ile d'Orléans below Quebec.

Much of the instruction was religious, with a minimum of elementary schooling for all except those intended for the seminary. There was little need for more. For the girls, however, the teaching sisters provided instruction past the elementary level to ready them as housewives: what might now be called 'domestic science'. Instruction was free on principle, but contributions were accepted from those who could afford it, so that books could be bought, buildings maintained, and, in winter, wood obtained to heat the classrooms. There were a number of petitions to the Sulpicians to establish secondary, or 'Latin', schools for boys, the object apparently having been more to keep them profitably occupied and out of trouble than to produce scholars. One petition of 1727 asked for the formation of a Latin school, declaring that

> all the military officers, law officers, bourgeois, merchants and inhabitants, moved very keenly by the ignorance and laziness of their children which has given rise to lamentable disorders, have recourse to pray you . . . to second their good intentions by procuring them the means of maintaining their youths in order, and of inspiring them with those sentiments of submission necessary to render these children good servants of the King, as well as of God.

That nothing came of this or of other similar requests appears to reflect at least to some degree the jealousies between the orders and among officials for the security of their little empires. Such higher education as there was in the colony remained largely in the hands of Quebec.

Apart from religious and academic instruction – there was also, of course, a continuing missionary effort among the Indians – a haphazard system of apprentice training functioned from fairly early in the period. Nevertheless, the supply of skilled men was always short, as was labour generally, as evidenced by attempts to bring slaves into the colony.

The history of the first so-called General Hospital begun by one François Charon at the turn of the century derived from this labour problem. Charon's intention was to establish his hospital (in the sense of an institute of charity) for, among other things, the training of young indigents in manufacturing and trade. He received royal letters patent but the project became an object of jealousy and bickering, especially after Charon and two assistants, Pierre Le Ber and Jean Fredin, sought

to expand their institution into a normal school and after the teaching staff began to take religious vows and wear the habit, which led to the place's becoming known as the hospital of the Frères Charon. After the founder's death in 1719 the hospital fell gradually into disuse and government support was withdrawn in 1730.

At about the same time, the famed charitable order known as the Grey Sisters had its founding. This was the achievement of another of those remarkably energetic and devout women associated with the French régime in Montreal. Marguerite d'Youville was the stepdaughter of a physician, Dr. Timothé Silvain (i.e., Sullivan – there were a number of Irish in the colony during the French period), whose unhappy marriage ended with the early death of her husband, leaving her with two small children to rear and, apparently, a driving ambition to make herself useful to the community. In association with two other young women, Mesdemoiselles Demers and Cusson, she rented a house in 1737 and gave shelter to a number of indigents. All sorts of slanderous tales were spread about the refuge, including one that the ladies were being trained by the Sulpicians as a sort of 'fifth column' to take over the Charon Frères hospital and another that they sold spirits to the Indians and even drank excessively themselves. Hence the name 'soeurs grises' – drunken sisters. At one point the clamour was so noisy the Recollets refused Mme d'Youville communion.

Such can be the reward for good works. Yet despite the opprobrium to which they were exposed, the ladies pooled their possessions to buy a new house after the original home burned in 1745. They also adopted a formal religious discipline and, as sympathy and assistance grew, moved again to more commodious quarters and expanded their work on behalf of the sick, the abandoned, the needy, and the insane. In 1747 they took over the by then badly dilapitated General Hospital, repaired and refurbished it, and finally, after further vicissitudes which seem to have reflected the politics of the orders and the jealousy of the 'do-gooders', made their case once and for all by receiving the royal letters patent originally given Charon and by the adoption, with pride, of the grey habit whose name had originated in derision.

In addition to the Grey Nuns' work and that of Hôtel Dieu, care of the civilian sick was undertaken by the military hospital of Montreal when space was available. The Crown contributed as well to the care of foundlings, paying for a nurse during the first eighteen months of infancy and later subsidizing foster parents to rear them to the age of 18 or even 20.

It goes without saying that eighteenth-century medicine was, by today's standards, primitive. Epidemics took a terrible toll of the

population, and no discussion of health services would be complete without tribute to that remarkable man of science, Michel Sarrazin, one of the foremost physicians of his time who spent much of his life in New France combating with considerable success the recurrent epidemics and acting as a skilled surgeon and prolific maker of accurate catalogues of the plant and animal life of the country. Between 1735 and the conquest, the work of Sarrazin and his successors was intensified through assistance provided by the Académie Royale des Sciences. Such names as those of Jean François Gaultier, *médecin du roi* for Quebec, the Austrian surgeon de Feltz, and the Frenchman André Arnoux, among others, add lustre to the practice of science and the healing of the sick and wounded in the colony.

Farms, fisheries, furs, and the forest – these and the great water transport system of the St. Lawrence and the Lakes were the raw materials from which the courage and ingenuity of the French colonials created an economic base for their society. Agriculture and the fur trade were the essence of the economy of the western part of Canada: farming in the rich soil of the St. Lawrence valley and on Montreal Island itself, and furs with their source receding farther and farther afield, as competition grew from Albany and the Hudson's Bay Company. Manufacturing was of slight consequence, though the forges of the St. Maurice near Trois Rivières provided a rudimentary source of iron, if not of profit. Lumbering was begun early, as was shipbuilding; fishing, of course, had been a basic occupation as long as anyone could remember, and Canadian-based fleets grew up in a small way to compete with those from across the Atlantic. But most of this activity was in the east, based on Newfoundland or Acadia. Montreal's importance was as the commercial centre of the fur trade, of such elementary banking as was required, and of the brisk smuggling that was never seriously curbed.

In good times (i.e., when there was a healthy demand for peltry in France – or Albany – and no serious oversupply) furs were the source of wealth for the merchants of Montreal and those who operated far afield with the town as their ultimate base. Equally, in times when the market was out of balance, a man could lose heavily. Furthermore, a chronic shortage of specie – the colony used the silver or gold coinage of any nation – and the unreliability of the 'card' money (playing cards signed by the Intendant), whose face value could fall by as much as 75 per cent, meant that the foundations of banking and commerce were too often built on economic sand.

With the advance of the century, agriculture began to be the more reliable, if not spectacular, means of prosperity. In the thirty-odd years

leading to 1739, which appears to have been the high point in the Canadian balance of trade, land under tillage rose from 43,501 to 164,741 arpents, with a comparable increase in the output of wheat and other grain (chiefly oats). The only other sizeable crop was peas (63,549 bushels in 1734), although hemp for both cloth and rope was grown haphazardly, as was enough tobacco to satisfy the colony's needs (there was, incidentally, an ordinance forbidding smoking on Montreal's streets). For some reason potato culture was tried only as a curiosity though it too became a staple after the conquest. Pastureland increased by 500 per cent between 1700 and 1740, as did the number of livestock. These observations are for the colony as a whole, of course, but the Montreal district was rich farming country.

Manufacturing, as we have seen, was never one of the colony's strong points, to some extent because of the view in France that if encouraged it would disrupt the mercantilist system under which New France was intended to become a market for French-made goods. Nevertheless, the Montreal district had its 'cottage' spinning and weaving, and the town its tailoring establishments, bakeries, tanneries, stone quarries, and limekilns near by and, towards the end of the period, brickyards – an indication of the changing fashion in building materials.

Because skilled workmen and even ordinary labourers and domestics were always in short supply, their pay was high by European standards, though certainly not of a scale to provide luxury. Some examples, with contrasting prices of staples: a skilled worker could command up to three livres a day, a footman would be paid up to 150 livres a year, a maidservant 100, a labourer between 30 and 40 sols (20 to the livre) a day, the church organist about 100 livres a year. One could buy a chicken for 10 or 12 sols, a turkey for 20, a dozen eggs for five, a pound of butter for eight. A good horse sold for 100 livres, a cow for 50, a year-old hog for 15.

Obviously it was more than boredom that sent many a young habitant out to a career as a *coureur de bois* in the faraway *pays d'en haut*. The *coureur* went directly to the Indian to trade and, sometimes, to live in an Indian community and take an Indian wife. He worked on a 'grub-stake' basis with a merchant in Montreal: his food, trade goods, and other necessities in return for half his take. Some are reputed to have made fortunes of two and a half million livres; most spent what they made on glorious, swaggering sprees in Montreal before setting out again for the lonely woods and streams.

Then there was the 'official' fur trade, licensed by the Intendant, with trade goods stored in the royal magazine in Montreal and in stockaded posts at such places as La Présentation, Niagara, Portage, Presqu'Ile,

Rivière aux Boeufs, Duquesne, and beyond, to which the Indians came with their beaver pelts. But there was many a man who traded as an avocation, officials of one sort or another who were attracted to the colony by the knowledge that a modest salary was only a beginning. It was estimated that, at one time, about 10 per cent of the people of Canada were engaged in the trade – and, as virtually all were adult men, that was a very high proportion in a population of 50,000 men, women, and children.

In the late 1720s a road was constructed between Montreal and Quebec and a regular postal service begun. The river channel had not been improved, however, and only small sailing craft could get as high as Montreal (it took five days from Quebec). There were no docks or jetties; the ships anchored and boats or two-wheeled carts went out to unload them. A number of abortive attempts were made to dig a canal from Lake St. Louis around the Lachine rapids and on, via a small lake on the island, to the St. Peter River and thence into the St. Lawrence. Some work had even been done as early as 1689 before the Lachine Massacre. The project was a dream of Dollier de Casson's when he was Superior of the Sulpicians and in 1700 a self-taught engineer called Gédéon de Catalogne tried first to follow the original plan and later to divert the St. Martin rivulet (Craig Street) into the St. Peter, the only result being a serious flood in neighbouring fields. All told, the Sulpicians put 20,000 livres into these projects. Failure in this as in other ventures in New France was becoming a common story – too little capital, too little talent. The colony simply was not getting the royal subsidies needed for public works of any consequence.

Most of one's time in this frontier land was taken up with the rudimentary business of making a living. But the habitant was as gay as he was brave and resourceful. In the long winters, especially, there was plenty of time for socializing and merriment. Hunting and sharpshooting were popular sports among men – and not just for sport. Snowshoe racing was common among the youth, learned from the Indians, of course, as were tobogganing and lacrosse. Croquet and tennis were played by the well-to-do, among whom horsemanship was also a favourite pastime. There were tests of skill with tools and instruments among the craftsmen, and the tradition of the strongman seems to have begun early. Social gatherings were marked by much music and dancing and prodigious eating.

Among 'society' – officialdom and the army officers – there were attempts to imitate the life of the salons of France. Quebec, the capital, took the lead, the degree of extravagance usually depending on the

importance (and wealth) of the Governor and his staff. But Montreal, as Professor Adair puts it, had

> an established social life which burst into activity rivalling that of Quebec when the Governor General and Intendant arrived, as they usually did early in the year. . . . For three or four months Montreal became the social capital of New France. When to this was added any considerable body of regular troops (as was especially true in the final war against the English), entertainments became almost oppressive, and Montcalm, for instance, complained bitterly of the round of dinners and suppers and balls; the Chevalier de Lévis 'had invited 65 ladies young and old; thirty would have been enough, so many men being away at war. The hall was brilliantly illuminated . . . much ceremony and attentive hospitality, and the party did not leave till 7 o'clock in the morning.' Montcalm, however, went to bed early . . .

In 1757, with the Bourbon flag waving over Ticonderoga and the ramparts of Crown Point, Montreal was the base and military heart of Canada, and, as Parkman writes, 'its social centre also, where were gathered conspicuous representatives both of Old France and of New; not men only but women. It was a sparkling fragment of the reign of Louis XV, dropped into the American wilderness.'

Montcalm, the commander, dreaming sometimes of his beloved Château de Candiac, had recently been given the coveted honour of the *cordon rouge* by his King. 'Montreal,' wrote this soldier with the tastes of the country gentleman, 'is as good a place as Alais . . . As for Quebec it is as good as the best cities of France, except only ten or so.' Then he asks his wife to send prunes, olives, anchovies, muscat wine, capers, cloth for liveries, and a dozen bottles of English lavender. He writes of dinners he must give, of balls he must attend, yet a note of anxiety is always there.

Three years later Montcalm was dead, Lévis and his ladies young and old were gone, and a Redcoat was installed in the Château de Ramezay. 'Between Canada and the British colonies the chief difference was not one of kind but of size,' writes Professor Frégault. 'It had very few people; they were populous. Hence, after an inevitable conflict, it was defeated.'

8 The End of an Era

'Hence,' to repeat Professor Frégault's assessment, 'after an inevitable conflict, [New France] was defeated.' Yet, at the turn of the eighteenth century, as Professor Eccles observes, 'the French held half the continent in fee', with Acadia regained, the English all but driven from Newfoundland, the French with the upper hand on Hudson Bay, the Iroquois's fangs drawn, and 'French authority extended through the Great Lakes to the great plains beyond and down the Mississippi valley to the Gulf'. No doubt 'the Canadians were brimful of confidence that they could more than hold their own in any military contest with the English colonies.' They could and did, by and large, for more than half a century; so much so that when the end came it came with a swiftness that dazed the people of Canada and of Montreal and left a quality of numbness in the French civilization of the St. Lawrence that persisted long after French officialdom had departed with Vaudreuil, leaving a sad, bewildered city behind.

True, the British colonies were fifteen times more populous and, given the sporadic nature of the attention paid the New World by Versailles for over half a century, they probably had historical inevitability on their side. Yet even as recent a year as 1757 was a disastrous one for English arms in America at a time when London had decided finally to take the American conflict in dead earnest. Over the decades before that, with one or two notable exceptions, the English colonials had spent more time quarrelling among themselves than they had in anything resembling concerted action against the French to the north.

Until 1756 (or the year before, if Braddock's ill-fated expedition is

counted), engagements were usually between French and allied Indian forces – whose muscle was a regular French army and whose planning and direction came from a single, centralized, and authoritarian government in France and Quebec – and the civilian militia of one or, occasionally, two or three badly organized British colonies. Nor was it remarkable to find that when, as happened in 1754, the French were fighting Virginia for control of the pivotal Ohio country, Pennsylvania looked on with neutral disinterest (under a façade of Quaker pacificism), and that while this fracas went on, New York was carrying on normal commercial relations with Montreal. Finally, the skill displayed by French officials in their Indian diplomacy, and by Frenchmen, regulars or irregulars, in the raiding and guerilla warfare against the British colonies, played significant parts in keeping the balance of war, whether 'cold' or 'hot', long tilted in favour of the fleur-de-lis.

Numbers and the British navy counted, in the sense that New France could not *conquer* New England, though she could keep Englishmen fairly well bottled up east of the Alleghenies. But it was not simply the numerical superiority of the Thirteen Colonies that defeated New France with such suddenness; it was the decision taken in London to pit British regulars, backed by seapower, against French regulars, without seapower, in the few areas of the New World where geography, logistics, and grand strategy made it possible and desirable. That more British armed might was on hand where and when it counted in those last three years was the result of the brilliance of the Prime Minister, William Pitt, and of the superiority of his seamen and admirals who kept the lines of supply and reinforcement open to England and – again when it mattered – closed to France.

What had seemed for so long the strength of France in America – 'power based on the wilderness itself, economically on furs, militarily on water communication, and diplomatically on manipulating the Indian tribes' – had become, as Frenchmen laid claim to half the continent, a liability. The French advance, as Professor Thistlethwaite says, 'was by governmentally acquired acquisition of strategic points; the British was like a creeping tide of trade and settlement whose movement was controlled by the laws of private profit.' Those very mercantilist policies designed to protect English products from colonial competition sent the American colonials farther north and west into the wilderness to find the raw materials to exchange for English manufactures.

> So long as the Anglo-French colonial conflict remained a matter of competition for the control of the fur trade, the French had great advantages to take the initiative and gain victories in informal

> fighting; but when the American dispute became part of a major conflict between great European powers, British sea power broke the tenuous threads that held the French colonies together. For the first half of the eighteenth century France and England isolated their American disputes; but after the reversal of alliances in 1756 (England joining with Prussia, France with Austria) these colonial conflicts were merged in a greater struggle which left England the dominant power in North America.[1]

Thus, ironically if inevitably, the decisions that doomed Montreal as a French-governed community were actually taken in that same far-off Europe where the decisions for its beginnings had been made.

By the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 France had lost Acadia, but in the next year nevertheless it instituted a policy of systematic expansion in North America designed to overcome the relatively minor setbacks of Queen Anne's War. The great fortress base of Louisbourg was begun on Ile Royale (Cape Breton) to counter the British in Acadia and Newfoundland and to secure the vital St. Lawrence sea entrance to the settled colony at Quebec and its hinterland. Not only that, but by one means or another with an expenditure of little more than guile they managed to use the Acadians as a fifth column that would not be eradicated for forty years. For most of this time, the French retained their 'cold war' equality in the area. Not until 1749, at the beginning of that eight-year hiatus between the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War, did British policy firm sufficiently for officials to decide to create a port and garrison settlement at Halifax as a makeweight against Louisbourg and as a military and naval base on the northern flank of the seaboard reaching from New England to the West Indies. Although geographically far away, all this had much to do with what was finally to happen to Canada – and to Montreal.

Four years earlier, during the 'formal' conflict known in the Thirteen Colonies as King George's War, the New Englanders had managed a quite remarkable piece of co-ordination when 3,000 militia from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, secured by a British naval squadron, effected the capture of Louisbourg. But in 1748 Louisbourg had become merely a pawn in the negotiations at Aix-la-Chapelle and was returned to France; an outstanding opportunity for checkmating France in America was thus given up. Louisbourg was strengthened and Fort Beauséjour built on the Chignecto isthmus which joins today's New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The

[1]The quotations from Professor Thistlethwaite are from *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. VII, Chap. XXII, Part 2, which provides one of the clearest brief accounts of the latter stages of the North American rivalry.

moral, stated before and to be stated again, was the obvious one: victories on this continent could be nullified by defeats in Europe. The English colonies alone could neither conquer New France nor sufficiently influence policy at Westminster to make that aim seem of first importance. Both powers had too many other fish to fry.

Meanwhile, the aggressive frontiersmen, both British and French, carried on their nasty little border wars in North America, of raids and forest ambushes, to which the various Indian tribes, usually tending towards support of French projects, added the elements of terror that had once been the scourge of Montrealers and that now made the times especially anxious to the villagers of New England. As we have seen, Montreal, the key to French expansionist strategy within the continent, was relatively secure from such reprisals as the English colonies tried to bring off because of its strategic location. The greatest scare for the island town during the years between 1740 and 1748 was an English-inspired Mohawk raid which reached the fringe of the community but was easily routed there. Plans being drawn up in Albany for a more ambitious expedition against Montreal were forestalled in 1746 by a French attack on Saratoga, which in turn led to French action against Massachusetts. This sort of fighting was vicious, but it involved no large bodies of men. Yet such occurrences as the massacre at Deerfield, Massachusetts, early in the century, where the French Indians got out of hand (not unusual) and butchered fifty-three white men, women, and children in the village before carrying off 111 prisoners to be redeemed for gold in Canada, left wounds along the frontier that were easily reopened when opportunity presented itself. Much of the brutality could be laid to the Indians' method of warfare, but in the numerous incidents they were judged to be fighting as allies of one European colony or another, and the ultimate blame was thus apportioned. As the French were more generally successful in their Indian diplomacy after 1700, so was their successful raiding score higher.

Peter Kalm was in Montreal when word of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle arrived in 1748 and he observed that the town had survived the eight years of hostilities in comparative comfort. At the proclamation of peace, he wrote, 'the soldiers were under arms, the artillery on the walls was fired off, and the salutes were given by the small firearms. All the streets were crowded with people till late at night.'

After 1748, the cold war was resumed in Acadia and New England. In the interior of the continent, France and England again locked horns. It was a struggle, embryonic for decades but now become serious, for dominance in that area between the Great Lakes and the Ohio which was vital to the whole French empire – a struggle that proved to be

the spark that set off the last round, which ended with the surrender of Montreal in 1760.

Until these hostilities formally began, however – that is to say, through the period when the two colonial powers sought to keep the North American struggle isolated – the key to the Great Lakes–Ohio region lay in who could exert most influence over the Indians, especially the relatively sophisticated Iroquois Confederacy. Their purpose was to preserve as much independence as they could from both French and English, but without depriving themselves of the white man's goods on which their own economy had come to depend.

The importance of the Iroquois to the colonists of either side was, of course, their continuing role in the fur trade and their value as auxiliaries in such fighting as might occur. The opening of King George's War in 1740 brought into play a French scheme to drive the English traders out of the Ohio country altogether. But, for a variety of reasons, the over-all ramifications of the war put the English in the more advantageous position. By the war's formal end the Virginians and Pennsylvanians were, to some extent in competition with each other, attempting to consolidate an unsteady eminence in the Ohio region.

In 1749, then, Governor La Galissonière decided to reverse the trend, especially as the English traders were being followed west by settlers and a Virginia-based Ohio company had already begun extensive surveying. La Galissonière had already sent a force under Céléron de Bienville (one of the Le Moynes) to lay formal claim to the region about the Ohio forks; and then, in 1752, a French-led force of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians wiped out the English post at Pickawillany near the source of the Wabash River, the key to the English position in the Ohio region. In the next year the new French Governor in Canada, the Marquis Duquesne, established a chain of forts south from Lake Erie, aimed straight at the Ohio forks – Presqu'Ile, Le Boeuf, and Benango.

The Virginians sought to counteract with a fort at the forks; the French responded by knocking it down and building the much stronger Fort Duquesne in its place. Finally, in 1754, Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia dispatched a small force of militia under a young colonel named George Washington which, though successful in a skirmish at Great Meadows, was badly beaten and mauled at Fort Necessity in July, the remainder withdrawing ignominiously. The French seemed, on the surface at least, to be in full possession of the Ohio Country, secure from Louisbourg northward through the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, and from there south to the Gulf of Mexico. In fact, Washington's defeat was the spark out of which flamed the Seven Years War in America. The establishment of Halifax as a charge on the home

government in Britain in 1749 had already made a precedent, if a small one, for a move away from the traditional view that local defence was solely a colonial responsibility; now the vacillating Duke of Newcastle moved further in the new direction by deciding to back the Virginians with British regulars, though with only two battalions (about 1,000 men) under the command of the elderly General Braddock. What happened to those battalions and a like number of militiamen when caught in ambush by 900 French and Indians as they marched on Fort Duquesne in the summer of 1755 is (or used to be, at any rate) in every schoolchild's history primer. Braddock's defeat and death, the routing of his force, and the loss of its supplies, ended, as Professor Thistlethwaite says, 'the British Government's essay in limited warfare against the French'. The escalator now began to move more rapidly.

Though men like La Galissonière and Duquesne favoured a forward policy, the ministry in France, conscious of its weaknesses in the Atlantic sea lanes, still hesitated to take the final plunge. Technically at peace, they used the navigation season of 1755 to reinforce Canada and in 1756 took Oswego, the main British fort on Lake Ontario, and with it secured the support of the western Indians; but Paris was still not committed to an all-out effort to destroy the British or their colonies. In May of that year the Seven Years War formally began, following that so-called diplomatic revolution in Europe whose most important point, for the colonial empires, was that, by securing Austria as an ally, France was freed of a long-standing European antagonist and was thus in a position to intensify the struggle overseas – in India, in the West Indies, in North America. 'The American conflict,' says Professor Thistlethwaite, 'had at last merged with the power conflicts of the European system and the military might of both parent powers could be mobilized to achieve a decision by force of arms on the American continent.'

At the outset the God of War smiled on the fleur-de-lis. In 1755 the Marquis de Vaudreuil had been appointed Viceroy, the first native-born Canadian to be so honoured. The next spring, shortly before the formal outbreak of hostilities, another marquis – Montcalm – arrived as commander of all the French forces in North America. Besides Braddock's defeat in 1755, other English advances had been repelled at Niagara and at Crown Point on Lake Champlain. Treachery had lost Beauséjour for the French in Acadia.

Montcalm was greeted by a salute of guns (technically unmerited, he noted, 'but they do things differently in the colonies') and was welcomed by Vaudreuil when he reached Montreal to take command of the troops on May 26, 1756. The reception took place at the Château Vaudreuil, the nearest thing to a palace with its formal gardens near

the river. Montcalm and his substantial staff added colour to the society of the town that was to be their headquarters for most of the rest of the struggle. So did the new troops (the La Sarre and Royal Roussillon regiments) that Montcalm had brought with him. Recalled an officer of La Sarre: 'The "ton français" prevails, the vocation for marriage is in favour, and there are very pretty girls who entertain us. We have already had five of our officers married.'

Relations between Montcalm and Vaudreuil, soon to cool, appear to have been good at the outset. 'M. de Vaudreuil overwhelms me with civilities,' the General wrote. 'I think that he is pleased with my conduct towards him, and that it persuades him there are general officers in France who can act under his orders without prejudice or ill-humour.' But, not long after: 'I am on good terms with him . . . but not in his confidence, which he never gives to anybody from France. His intentions are good but he is slow and irresolute.'

Behind the growing misunderstanding seems to have been Vaudreuil's hope that he would command the troops himself, and, however courteous he may have been at the outset, he was apparently prejudiced against anyone whom the Court might send out to command, including this 'man of small stature, with a lively countenance, a keen eye, and, in moments of animation, rapid, vehement utterance, and nervous gesticulation', as Parkman describes Montcalm. Indecisive though assertive was Vaudreuil, Parkman adds, and though capable of being guided if his sensitive egoism was tactfully appealed to, he reacted sharply against the impetuosity of Montcalm – to the detriment of New France.

To Vaudreuil's pique at being denied full command of all French forces was added the confusion of the military organization itself. There were three sorts of troops, the regular French line regiments (Troupes de Terre), the colonial regulars (Troupes de la Marine), and the habitant militia. There were six battalions of line regulars (about 3,000 men), forty companies of Troupes de la Marine (about 2,600 men), only recently brought to something resembling discipline by Duquesne, plus some colonial artillery, and, finally, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 5,000 mobilized colonial militia (though all able-bodied men from 15 to 60 were liable for service), most of whom were used in transport and other line-of-communication duties. It was not a large army, but neither was the British; nor were the opportunities to deploy large forces liable to be frequent. There appears to have been considerable friction among the three divisions of troops, with the militiamen, superb guerilla fighters, holding the others in something close to contempt. That is probably one reason why so few of the 15,000 men potentially

available were ever employed in the formal battles, though they were farmers, too, and the colony had to be fed.

Then there were the Indian allies – 'villains messieurs' was Montcalm's term for them as he came more and more to dislike the constant visiting back and forth required of him.

> You would not believe it [he wrote], but the Indian men always carry to war, along with their tomahawk and gun, a mirror to daub their faces with various colours, and arrange feathers on their heads and rings in their ears and noses. . . . Often they wore a laced coat, with no shirt at all. You would take them for so many masqueraders or devils. One needs the patience of an angel to get on with them. . . . They make war with astounding cruelty, sparing neither men, women, nor children, and take off your scalp very neatly, – an operation which generally kills you.

Thus, beneath a surface of good relations, there was considerable tension between the native-born Vaudreuil and the new commander from France, but these differences about ways of conducting war were less important than the limitations of their resources and the defeat of French fleets by Admiral Hawke at Quiberon Bay on November 20, 1759. Clearly, French strategy demanded going on to the defensive in North America while British resources made possible large-scale offensive operations.

Loudon, the new commander of British forces, logically decided to withdraw troops from the New York frontier for service on a maritime expedition directed against Louisbourg and ultimately Quebec. This enabled Montcalm, from his Montreal base, to take Fort William Henry to the south of the French posts of Ticonderoga and Crown Point and to destroy Oswego. The fortunes of war were again unkind to Britain as Abercrombie's forces failed before Ticonderoga on July 8, 1758. But Montcalm's fortunes were short-lived. Before the month was over, Louisbourg had fallen and forts Frontenac and Duquesne would both fall to the British before Christmas.

In 1759, the English planned another fourfold campaign against Niagara, the French settlements on Lake Erie, against Ticonderoga and Crown Point, as well as up the St. Lawrence against Quebec. As the fall of Quebec would cut off the communication of New France with the sea, it would be decisive, but not in itself final. When the steady volleys of Wolfe's thin red lines shattered Montcalm's forces on the Plains of Abraham, the campaign was by no means over. This has always been a part of the Canadian mythology many believe; falsely so. Vaudreuil still had a force, based on Montreal, which might hope to retake Quebec and ultimately receive reinforcement from France. A

force sent from Montreal under Lévis in the spring of 1760 defeated the British commander, General Murray, at Ste. Foy, forcing him back within the walls of Quebec and holding him there under siege. But Lévis had no choice but to withdraw on the arrival of British ships in the spring.

In the summer of 1760, British forces converged on Montreal from all quarters. Lord Jeffrey Amherst came down the river from Lake Ontario, General Haviland marched by the Champlain-Richelieu route, and Murray marched west up the St. Lawrence from Quebec. The end was nearing.

During the winter of 1756–7, while Vaudreuil and Montcalm argued the relative merits of the *petite guerre* of the colonial world and formal European warfare, Montcalm reflected on the hardships of war in the New World and the gaiety of Montreal society. He wrote: 'It must, however, be admitted that in Europe they have no idea of the hardships of marching and sleeping as it were on the snow or the ice and being reduced to bread and lard and often having to drag provisions for sixteen days.'

However, the full force of such hardships was not felt at headquarters, as Montcalm wrote during the same period.

> Since being here, I pass my time giving big dinners to parties of fifteen or sixteen persons – and sometimes suppers – On Sunday, I gather together the ladies from France . . . Wednesday, a gathering at the house of Madame Varin [M. Varin was in charge of the Commissariat of the Marine Department of Montreal]; Thursday, a ball at that château of the Chevalier de Lévis. . . . The hall was brilliantly illuminated; it is as large as the intendant's; much ceremony, attentive hospitality, refreshments in abundance all the night, of every kind and species, and the party did not leave till seven in the morning. . . . The public imagined that our aides-de-camp were to give a Mardi Gras; but I have advised them to wait until after Easter and after the success of our detachment, when it will be more suitable to give public marks of joy.

This with the fate of New France hanging in the balance. Montcalm went on:

> Everything is very expensive. One must live according to one's rank and I do it. Every day, sixteen persons at the table. . . . Once a week with the Governor-General, and with M. de Lévis, who also lives well. He has given three fine balls. . . . I have had my assistant-cook married for I am bent on peopling the colony. Eighty soldier marriages this winter and two of officers. The ladies are

witty, courteous and pious. At Quebec, they are gamesters; at Montreal, conversation and the dance prevail.

This round of gaiety almost on the eve of the finale was dampened in the early spring by the spectre of famine in Quebec City, which made necessary the sending of supplies from Montreal until the arrival from Bordeaux of two ships bringing provisions. Montreal was so crowded with Indian allies and troops in the summer of 1757 that it was ordered that rations for over 12,000 for a month must be collected from the surrounding country. This was the brief season of victory which saw the taking of Oswego and the destruction of Fort William Henry, which represented a triumph for Vaudreuil's theory of Indian-type warfare. These triumphs, however, brought with them horrors arising out of the Indians' treatment of prisoners of war. At Oswego, English captives could only be saved by ransom paid by the French Crown. Fifty were killed while under a safe-conduct near Fort William Henry, and, in defiance of the terms of capitulation, 200 English were brought to Montreal where the Indians cooked one and compelled his compatriots to eat his flesh. The others were ransomed at the price of two barrels of *eau de vie* a head.

Food to all Montrealers, excepting only those of high station, became a serious problem in the winter of 1757–8. Even the diet of the professional fighting man was reduced to six pounds of meat and two of codfish for eight days. Soldiers were, as far as possible, quartered in outlying villages to lighten the burden on the stores kept at Montreal. Yet by mid-winter a reduction of the diet of both military and civilians to horse flesh brought a near mutiny among the troops and a demonstration from the women of Montreal. Lévis won over the soldiers by consuming horse flesh in the presence of the troops, whose cooks later acquired considerable skill in its preparation. Vaudreuil, who received a women's delegation of four which told him that the horse was a friend of man and should not be eaten, answered the women's complaint by threatening to hang half of them.

In the face of the prevailing scarcity, some gestures towards equality of sacrifice were made by insisting on some degree of frugality in 'high society'. 'All the colony applauds,' wrote Montcalm, but 'the Intendant [Bigot] not so much; he loves display.' Yet Vaudreuil and Bigot and their circle continued their entertainments, with Montcalm, who spent much of his time at Ticonderoga, attending occasionally but not approving of this way of almost desperately gay life.

Relief came again with the spring and the arrival of ships from France, while the summer saw the last substantial victory of France with the repulse of Abercrombie at Ticonderoga. Yet the circle was

tightening with the fall of Louisbourg, Fort Frontenac, and Fort Duquesne. The inevitable defeat was beginning to cast its long shadow over the French headquarters. Would help come from Old France? Could it?

Montcalm remained in Montreal until December 22, demanding higher pay for his troops and winning his point, and reading Diderot's *Encyclopédie* before departing for the even livelier atmosphere of Quebec. Behind much of the gay social life was the war-profiteering of the Intendant Bigot, of Cadet and Duchenaux in Quebec, and of their Montreal counterparts, Varin, head of the commissariat, Martel, the keeper of stores, and Penniseault, an agent of Cadet. In April, Montcalm wrote, 'Except for an unexpected good fortune, or a great diversion into the English colonies by sea, or great mistakes on the side of the enemy, Canada will be taken this campaign, or certainly next.'

During the two months and twelve days of the siege of Quebec, 1,150 Montreal militia served. With the fall of the city, on September 18, 1759, and the departure of the English fleet on October 18, Montreal became a base for the retaking of Quebec. Yet everything depended on sea power. Lévis sailed down the river in the winter of 1759–60 with 6,910 men, picking up militia companies and garrison on the way, to the point where his forces numbered eight or nine thousand. However, the victory over Murray at Ste. Foy was futile, for the arrival of British ships in the spring of 1760 threatened his river communications and forced him to fall back on Montreal.

It now remained for Vaudreuil and Lévis to await the end at Montreal with the forlorn hope that bad co-ordination among the converging forces would enable them to meet the British columns one by one. Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point had been blown up in the summer of 1759 and the garrisons withdrawn to Montreal. Fort Frontenac (Kingston) had been taken by the British in 1758. Now all the outer defences were gone. The city itself could not withstand a seige.

The co-ordination of British forces for once was good. Three British armies totalling about 16,000 arrived outside Montreal within forty-eight hours – Amherst in the northwest, Haviland at Longueuil, and Murray from Quebec only four hours' march behind Haviland. The departure of the militia and desertions from the regulars and Troupes de la Marine had reduced the French force to about 2,500. The Indians had made peace with the English and discipline among the French troops had gone to pieces. Vaudreuil at first sought a truce for a month but, on being refused, accepted the consequences and capitulated. A stunned population waited and wondered. Food was scarce. Confusion reigned in the minds of a hungry, almost lost people. How would the

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conquerors behave towards them? What changes would be imposed on their way of life? Their leaders and governors, among them the Canadian-born Vaudreuil, made ready to leave to take up residence in France. The average Montrealer could not have pulled up stakes had he wanted to do so. In any case, all but a few of the departing aristocracy and military were local-born. The haste with which they abandoned their people and left for France, never to return, is another aspect of the surrender too often overlooked by many who have written of this tragic hour in Montreal's history. By 1760, Montreal was a community composed not of transplanted Frenchmen, but of Canadiens.

So, in silent tragedy, an era ended on the morning of September 8, 1760, when Vaudreuil signed the papers of capitulation. One often wonders if events would have so moved had Montcalm not been killed on the Plains of Abraham that morning in 1759.

Part Two

9 New Subjects and Old: the Search for a Compromise

When Governor Vaudreuil signed the surrender of Montreal in September 1760 – and with it the *de facto* transfer of Canada from France to Britain – he left to General Jeffrey Amherst, commander of His Britannic Majesty's forces in America, a civilization with a distinct character, cast in the mould provided by Colbert a century before. It was a society both French and Catholic, superficially a copy of the Old Régime in Europe but in fact highly flexible. The people, markedly individualistic and self-reliant in their daily affairs, nevertheless had formally acquiesced in the authoritarian spirit of the Bourbon empire and in the concept of divine right by which King Louis – and, so they believed, all kings – professed to rule. They were innocent of and uninterested in the representative institutions so beloved of Englishmen, which the latter claimed were carried wherever Englishmen went. This was to be a source of trouble.

The physical property transferred to General Amherst, though underdeveloped even by the standards of New England, Pennsylvania, or New York, was impressive enough in actuality and possessed of a potential no man could measure. In the settled riverine areas were thousands of acres of well-tended farmland, and two substantial towns and a third smaller one, which European travellers compared favourably with larger ones across the water. Necklaces of whitewashed villages were neatly strung along the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu and for some distance up the Ottawa. This compact little civilization had its well-established church. Its education and social welfare services were quite remarkable for the time and place. It may have been weak in manufactures, but its enterprising people had spread their influence to the vast western plains and the Gulf of Mexico and, based on Montreal, had developed a trade in furs which had created millionaires and would create more – trade which would provide the impetus for a new Canadian capitalism, tied to London instead of Paris. Understandably, in this late summer of 1760, Montreal and its countryside were inhabited by people stunned by defeat – 65,000 souls bewildered in the face of an unknown future.

Still, few tears were shed for their departing masters. Vaudreuil's career had been notable for misjudgment, vacillation, and the increase of his private purse. Although Montreal-born, he chose to take up residence in France and to leave his own people to their fate. Not only had Bigot, the last Intendant, and his minions-on-the-make failed in their duty, but their unabashed peculations had bled the colony's wealth as the unsuccessful war had bled its manpower. The Chevalier de Lévis, Montcalm's successor, may not have admitted it publicly, but there was no fight left in Montreal or Canada; none certainly in what remained of the tattered army he had led home from his unsuccessful effort to retake Quebec, with a promise to take up arms no more in the then still-unfinished war. Nevertheless, these discredited men were the symbols of New France's historic ties and there were few among those they left behind who did not hope King Louis might win on other battlefields what they had lost for him here, and that, when the antagonists came finally to the peace congress, the fleur-de-lis might be re-established over King Louis's 'few thousand acres of snow'. Meanwhile, life must be lived and, in the chaos to which war had reduced the economy, this might not be simple. Who could know what to expect of these English from London and Boston about whom their departed master had said such dire things!

So the losers of 1760. For the winners, for Amherst and the officers he was to leave as governors in Montreal, Trois Rivières, and Quebec, the

immediate concern was also for the economy. Theirs was the responsibility now of seeing the colony through a hard winter, to be made even harder by shortages of almost everything needed for subsistence. Theirs also was the task of establishing with these new subjects of King George a rapport which would simplify the problems of administration and ensure that when the formal transition to British status came it would come smoothly.

Because these officers of His Britannic Majesty were intelligent men, because they concerned themselves energetically and pragmatically with the limited tasks of a military occupation, leaving the larger areas of policy to men in London (who turned out to be either less pragmatic or less informed or both), and because they had gained a high regard for the qualities of the Frenchmen who had resisted with a tenacity far beyond their numbers, rapport was rapidly reached. The military government lasted into 1764 and was in most ways a happy period for all. The tensions in Anglo-French relations in the new province of Quebec came later.

James Murray, who had succeeded Wolfe after the latter's death on the Plains of Abraham, had already set a pattern of relations during the uneasy winter of 1759–60 that he spent in Quebec, before the military outcome for Canada was sure. His own security dictated establishing the best possible relations with the townsfolk and the habitants on surrounding farms; but there was more than this in his thinking, as a dispatch to Amherst two months after the capture of Quebec indicates.

> Everybody [he wrote to the commander-in-chief] will inform you how powerful and how flourishing this colony was, and how formidable it might be under any other government than that of Monsieur Vaudreuil. *En bonne politique*, it should be perhaps destroyed, but there may be reasons why it should remain, as it is a guarantee for the good behaviour of its neighbouring colonies. . . . Until I have the honour to receive your orders, I shall follow the natural disposition of my heart, which dictates clemency. This conduct can do no hurt, because the effects of it may be undone in one week. It may have a permanent advantage. The Canadians have been taught to look upon us as barbarians whose only view was their destruction; hence the obstinate resistance they have made, and the eagerness they showed to take up arms against us. They begin now to be astonished with our conduct, will soon be convinced that there was no deceit in it, and hardly hereafter will be easily persuaded to take up arms against a nation they admire, and who will have it always in their (power) to burn or destroy. . . . They were never treated tenderly before we had the good fortune to take Quebec. They will remember that no doubt and it may be

> supposed they will not forget any instances of humanity and generosity that may be shown them since they have been entirely in our power.

Whatever the disposition of Murray's heart, there were other reasons, legal and practical, that spurred Amherst's policy of conciliation. Legally, as Chief Justice Mansfield was to elaborate in a later judgment, the position of the army towards the colony was clear: 'The laws of the conquered country continue in force until they are altered by the conqueror. The justice and antiquity of this maxim are incontrovertible.' Practically, apart from the fact that at no time was there any suggestion that the French of the St. Lawrence should meet the fate of those in Acadia, Amherst was faced with the need to garrison the colony. Unnecessary harshness could mean unnecessary expenditure of manpower and wealth. Thus his policy was simple: he took what he found and kept it going much as it had been, except that military tribunals replaced the Superior Council as the court for serious crimes and appeals. The three administrative districts of the French were maintained. The habitants were required, as they had been traditionally, to perform certain 'government' services, but this *corvée* work was paid for in hard cash at a time when French paper currency was valueless. The Roman Catholic Church was not interfered with, other than having some of its buildings requisitioned for barracks. The response in Montreal, where General Thomas Gage became Governor, was as warm as it had been and continued to be under Murray at Quebec. And Amherst's decision to form the garrison of British regulars only, sending home the American troops whose memories of brutish guerilla warfare might have led to ugly incidents, was sensible. But in case there was any doubt in the minds of the occupation forces, Amherst made it clear that the severest punishments, including in some cases hanging, awaited any British soldier who disobeyed instructions.

'As the inhabitants of this country are now as much His Majesty's subjects as any of us,' he enjoined Gage, Murray, and Colonel Ralph Burton in Trois Rivières, '[they] are entitled to the same protection, [and] I would have you particularly give it in charge to the troops under your command to live in good harmony and brotherhood with them and to avoid all differences whatsoever.' A document prepared for the enlightenment of the 'new subjects' throws further light on the occupation policy. It proclaimed their disarmament except for hunting weapons, which could be carried with permission; it announced the continuance of the *capitaines de milice* as local agents of government with a sort of justice of the peace status; and it spelled out the rates of remuneration for services rendered by individual habitants. For the

relief of the colony's hardships it offered this:

> The meagre support which Canada has received from France during the last two years having exhausted her wealth, provisions and necessaries, we have for the common good of the troops and the inhabitants requested by our letters to the different governors of the English colonies nearest to Canada that they have posted up and published notices to their colonists to repair hither with all kinds of commodities and provisions, and we flatter ourselves that there will be no delay in carrying out our plan for you, and when it is done, every person will be notified in order that he may participate in it at current prices and without duty.

This information was on a placard posted at the door of Montreal's Notre Dame Church and those of all other parishes. It reflected the same spirit that Amherst had urged on the military governors: 'As it is specially enjoined on the troops to live with the habitants in harmony and good fellowship, we likewise recommend the habitants to receive and treat the troops as brothers and fellow-citizens.' And so long as they obeyed those now in authority, the Canadians were promised 'the same privileges as the ancient subjects of the King'.

Amherst's conciliatory plans were approved by the home authorities, who stressed that he was to instruct Murray, Gage, and Burton to 'give the strictest orders to prevent all soldiers, mariners, and others from insulting or reviling any of the French inhabitants, now their fellow subjects, either by ungenerous insinuation of that inferiority which the fate of war has provided, or by harsh and provoking observations on their language, dress, manners, customs, or country, or by uncharitable reflections on the errors of that mistaken religion which they unhappily profess'.

Of the three governors Amherst left behind when he returned to New York in October, Montreal seems to have had the happiest choice. General Gage's equable temperament won him a warm place in the hearts of Montrealers, who referred to him as Amherst's '*Gage précieux*', before he left for Boston and unhappier years. Like the others, Gage was fluently bilingual and his secretary, Maturin, like the secretaries of the others, had French as his first language – in Maturin's case English was a problem, and Gage generally conversed with him in French.

Thus, as Professor A. L. Burt observes in his monumental *Old Province of Quebec*,

> the government which was . . . partly French above was entirely French below, for the whole of the administration was carried on through the agency of the Canadian militia officers (*capitaines de*

> *milice*). They were the hands, the eyes, the ears, and the mouth of the government. On Sundays, after listening to the words of God from the curé, the habitants heard the words of the government from the captain of militia, just as in the days of old. According to custom, also, these orders of man were posted on the church door to stimulate rather than refresh the memories of the people, most of whom were unlettered; and the lay official's duty, like that of the curé, was to see that the commands he uttered on Sunday were observed on week days. In this he seems to have been quite effectual, for, though he could not threaten eternal punishment, he was the local instrument of temporal authority.

In Montreal, Gage created a weekly court, comprising the militia captains of the town, which he later extended to the rural area of his command. This he divided into five districts based on Pointe Claire, Longueuil, St. Antoine, Pointe aux Trembles, and Lavaltrie. In these monthly courts of five to seven militia captains lesser litigious matters were resolved, as were matters which dealt with petty crime. The individual militia captains were also responsible for executing the justice of the courts, either by arrests or seizure of property in cases of disobedience. In maintaining the peace, these lower courts could deal with 'vagabonds and villains' and their punitive powers included the use of the lash, imprisonment, or fines. 'Atrocious crimes such as murder, rape or other capital offences' were the province of the military tribunals of British officers.

All courts had Canadians as clerks and in other lesser posts and, except in cases where both plaintiff and defendant spoke English, carried out their business in the tongue of the 'new subjects' – even to the point where cases arose of defendants in a mixed-language suit whose only language was English having to have the transcript translated. Further, the law used both in the lower and in the higher military courts was that in force under Vaudreuil. These practices were continued for a year and a half after the Treaty of Paris of 1763 formally ceded Canada to Britain, and the confusion that arose when attempts were made to apply English law led to considerable friction.

All through the documents relating to the administration of Montreal under the military régime, there runs this theme of preserving the Canadian society as it had been before Amherst accepted the city's and colony's surrender. These documents also provide evidence of other ways in which traditional forms were maintained and of the generally pragmatic approach within this context taken by men like Gage to the day-to-day problems of administration.

A most significant example was Gage's means of establishing con-

fidence in money. The habitants in the Montreal district were paying their debts to seigneurs and others in what, for the time being, at least, was the valueless scrip of the French régime. At the same time, they were receiving payment in British specie. This could have caused a breakdown at the top, which equally could have led to a complete breakdown in a system designed to operate with the least possible disturbance of the *status quo*. Gage stepped in and ordered the tenant and artisan to pay his *rentes* or other obligations in specie. The same with the tithe. There was pragmatic fairness in this, though later the habitant was to continue to try to regard the new master as a man whose dicta should be circumvented.

Bonne entente on the level of ordinary people was apparent in Montreal – especially in the way of marriages. These were frequent, both between officers and the daughters of the *noblesse* and between soldiers and girls of lesser birth. Names on parish rolls in the Montreal district confirm these, as does the amalgamation of British names into the catalogue of French.

That the occupation was not carried out by ogres, as was suggested by the departed servants of Louis XVI, must account for much of the willing collaboration of those Canadians who remained. The records for the man in the street are sparse – even non-existent. For those living on a somewhat higher plane there are such testimonials as this to General Gage:

> Cruel Destiny has cut short the Glorious Days of So Great and so Magnanimous a Monarch [reads a petition to the Governor from prominent Canadians on the death of George II]. We are come to pour out our Grief into the paternal Bosom of Your Excellency – the Soul Tribute of Gratitude of a People who will never cease to Exalt the mildness and Moderation of their New Masters. The General, who has conquered us, has rather treated Us as a Father than a Vanquisher and has left us a precious Pledge by name and deed of his Goodness to Us. What acknowledgments are we not beholden to make for so many Favors? Ha! They shall be forever Engraven in our Hearts in Indellible Characters. We endeavour to Deserve it by Our Zeal and by the Earnest Prayers. We shall ever offer up to the Immortal Being for Your Health & Preservation.

One could go on with encomiums extolling the good feeling between the new subjects and the occupying armies – most of them from English sources, though this is perhaps because most of the existing records are English. But two points must be made. The first is that, lacking leadership of their own (of the 2,000 Canadians who left in the two years after the cession of Montreal most were of the so-called élite), the habitants

accepted their occupiers with the same good grace the latter showed them. The second is that, whatever the degree of good will, it did not erase past memories. When Spain entered the war belatedly on the side of France, there was a flurry of hope in Canadian breasts that this might be enough to turn the tide to the fleur-de-lis. In fact all it did was lose Florida to the Spanish. Again, when the British sought to raise an expeditionary force of volunteers from the old *milice* during Pontiac's rebellion in 1764, the absence of enthusiasm among the habitants was embarrassing to the governors. By that time, of course, the Treaty of Paris had settled the question of sovereignty in Canada, and the grisly behaviour of the Indians in the hinterland, some of them former allies of France, tended to be viewed as a problem for the British and their older colonies against which the threat was directed. What the Canadians might have done had the French managed to return in force remains conjecture; the Pontiac episode makes clear that Britain's new subjects were not interested in fighting Englishmen's wars.

On their side, the English were less than wholeheartedly enthusiastic about becoming the heirs of the Bourbons in America. There was an English party quite prepared to sacrifice Canada for the sugar island of Guadeloupe, whose riches in those days were much more immediately apparent. However, pressure from British West Indian sugar interests and the determination of the vociferous Thirteen Colonies not to have a renewal of the French threat on their northern and western flanks won out.

Thus, by the Treaty of Paris in February 1763 France renounced all claim to Canada and its dependencies, in return receiving only the promise that Britain would grant the Canadians toleration 'as far as the laws of Britain would permit'. In the Royal Proclamation of October 1763 (which did not come into force until the following summer to allow Frenchmen who wished to leave Canada a full eighteen months' grace), this limited toleration was erected into a cornerstone of the proposed civil government and became one of the rocks on which original good intentions foundered. Other difficulties lay in the geographical boundaries set for the new British province of Quebec and in the failure of the immigration pattern that the framers of the Proclamation sought to stimulate.

It is easy to be wise after the fact; but the men of 1763 in London who sought to consolidate their empire in a consistent way were not aware, nor were they informed, how far the thirteen old colonies had moved towards self-government; nor were they expert enough in demography to realize that the east-west population trend was too well established to be altered by proclamation. Finally, lacking precedent,

their belief that they could somehow make an English colony – in constitutional, legal, religious, and, eventually, linguistic terms – out of 65,000 or 70,000 Frenchmen on the St. Lawrence was less unrealistic than it may appear in retrospect. When the importance of the issues is considered, these men showed noticeably greater flexibility in dealing with their new French subjects than in dealing with the demands soon to come from the old colonies to the south.

So far as Quebec was concerned, the purpose of the Proclamation and of the instructions given to Murray, now civil Governor, was to encourage the flow of English-speaking immigration from the south, which would have made anglicization a feasible long-term proposition. An English colony implied rudimentary representative institutions, and these, in the Quebec context, required a largish English Protestant population to provide both electors and elected until the French had seen fit to conform. Murray was instructed to initiate an assembly as soon as circumstances warranted – that he was expected to do so before very long is indicated by the fact that he could initiate no new taxes without it.

However, the east-west pattern of migration along the American frontier had been established, and the enticements of Quebec, with its French Catholic population and seigneurial tenure, were of scant interest to the freehold farmers of New England. Quebec's magnetism remained solely commercial, and Murray soon saw the impossibility of calling an assembly from five hundred or so English-speaking merchants who, because of the Protestant provisions of the Test Act, would have been the only persons eligible to serve or vote. He simply deferred the issue (with approbation from London) and tried to run the colony hodge-podge with the help of the so-called 'French party' (men like Adam Mabane who were neither French nor Catholic, but shared Murray's preference for at least the better class of Canadians over the English merchants).

Murray's improvisations included the *de facto* continuance of French civil jurisprudence and procedures – though English criminal law was introduced – and (increasingly futile) attempts to make the ancient sources of revenue provide some income for the public purse. Finally, after the failure of the immigration policy, he realized the hopelessness of letting the Roman Catholic religion 'wither away'. To their great credit, he and Mabane and their friends achieved the one thing needed to ensure its survival – the appointment of Briand as bishop of the see that had been vacant since before the conquest.

What came quickly to the fore was the clash of the new commercial interests with Murray and a nascent 'French party' on the one hand, and

with officers of the garrison on the other. This row was further complicated by the mutual jealousies of Murray and his senior army commanders, and led fairly quickly to a breakdown in the intended results of the Proclamation. The British and American merchants were a numerically small but increasingly vocal group, most of whom had come to Montreal, Trois Rivières, and Quebec as contractors for the army, in answer to Amherst's pleas for merchant-suppliers for the populace. Some of these men undoubtedly had the outlook and intentions of carpetbaggers, but many were reputable merchants whose names were to become inextricably interwoven with the early history of British rule in Montreal – especially in the new life they gave to the fur trade. But all this lay a while ahead.

Added to the 'constitutional' and judicial complaints of the English mercantile minority was a commercial one. The Proclamation of 1763 had separated Quebec from its traditional source of wealth – the fur-bearing lands of the old *pays d'en haut*. With a provincial boundary just west of the Ottawa River and most of the whole vast hinterland made into an Indian preserve (albeit only until a final settlement with the native tribes could be achieved), the would-be successors to the French in the fur trade found themselves hamstrung by a rigorous system of licensing and by being constrained to wait at the posts.

Meanwhile, in Montreal, a liaison was being worked out between the new English and the remaining French entrepreneurial groups for the renewed exploitation of the beaver of the *pays d'en haut*. Some of the former, like the redoubtable Alexander Henry who was off to Michilimackinac as early as 1761, had learned the ways of the trade in Albany. Others were newcomers to furs or to America – or to both. Yet they had access to English credit and English goods, while those of the French who remained were cut off from their former metropolis and banking house, Paris. Nevertheless, the latter were superior in their knowledge of the trading methods of the northwest, and in a number of cases something like equality of partnership was established. Behind the entrepreneur, of course, were the voyageurs whose *coureur de bois* traditions went back to Champlain, Radisson, and LaSalle. On their brawny arms and backs and bonnier courage the trade had been founded, and through them it prospered – and was to prosper even more as the great North West Company slowly took shape. In this sense, at any rate, as Professor Donald Creighton's attractive thesis has it:

> The conquest could not change Canada. In fact, in some ways, it strengthened the dominant impulse of Canadian life. It tied Canada to Great Britain, a commercial and maritime power far stronger than France; and it opened the St. Lawrence to the capital and

> enterprise of Britain and British America. To the defeated society of the north it brought fresh enthusiasm, a new strength and a different leadership. But this injection of new vigour, while it strengthened commercial Canada, necessarily raised the problems of assimilation. The conquest brought two groups of Americans, different even in terms of their Americanism, within the limits of a single colony; and it remained for the future to determine how long and how effectively they could co-operate in the struggle for the western trade. It was certain that the British Canadians would fight to realize the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence; but it was equally certain that they would be forced to fight in company with the Canadians of French descent.

Fight in company they did, and in the process they built a new Montreal on the profits of the trade and the later diversification of the wealth gained in the ever-broadening pursuit of the beaver. It was a Montreal that became the metropolis first of the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence and then, though the continental pre-eminence some of the fur barons dreamed of was denied, of the Dominion of Canada. In the early days, however, the society of the new Protestant burghers and a few Jewish merchants – McTavish, McGill, Mackenzie, Frobisher, Lymburner, Wentzel, Ermatinger, Oakes, Price, Heywood, Henry, Pangman, Pond, Molson, Gregory, Lees, Solomons, Levy – in general was small, middle class, polite, and relatively modest. Still it was sufficiently tinged with the frontier connection to have always an underlying quality of recklessness born of risks casually taken, and of the knowledge of wealth to be gained or of sudden disaster. The holders of some of these names would become famous in their own time, as well as in the history of their city and their new country. The motto of the Beaver Club formed by those who became 'true Nor'westers' – Fortitude in Danger – speaks for itself.

Trade, of course, was their main concern and profit their motive. To these ends they were prepared to commit themselves to hazards of life and purse that were foreign to the representatives of the lesser aristocracy and squirearchy who were Montreal's nominal governors. To place restrictions on the trade – limiting operations to the upcountry posts in what seemed a suicidal violation of the whole pattern of Indian relations established by the French, and, for a time, a strict licensing policy – looked to these adventurous merchants like a policy of economic disaster. To the soldier-governors these measures seemed the simplest way to control the vast Indian preserve, especially in the face of the open Indian hostility revealed by Pontiac's rebellion. The merchants complained vigorously to the irascible Murray and received in return

his obloquies as 'licentious fanatics'. 'I have been informed that Messrs. Wm. Mackenzie, Alex Mckenzie and Wm. Grant have been soliciting your Lordships to get them admitted to His Majesty's Council of this province,' he wrote to London. 'I think it my duty to acquaint your Lordships that the first of these men is a notorious smuggler and a turbulent man, the second a weak man of little character and the third a conceited boy.' Opinions provoked, perhaps, by a petition from the merchants in 1764 for Murray's removal and the summoning of an assembly, in which it was said that not only was Murray unsympathetic to the merchants' interests, but that he 'doth frequently treat them with a rage and rudeness of language and demeanour as dishonourable to the trust he holds of your Majesty as painful to those who suffer from it'.

Murray was also accused of taking measures to divide the old and new subjects by encouraging the latter to apply for French judges, of subverting the Protestant religion 'by almost total neglect of attendance upon the service of the Church', and of creating a state of affairs in which 'our trade is miserably confined and distressed' – no doubt the most painful item to such men. Small wonder that the harassed Governor became so fondly disposed towards the Canadians who, he said, 'are perhaps the bravest and best race upon the face of the globe, a race who, could they be indulged with a few privileges which the laws of England deny to Roman Catholics at home, would soon get the better of every natural antipathy to their conquerors and become the most faithful and most useful set of men in the American empire'.

The essence of all this, of course, was not a struggle between the English (or English-speaking) traders and the French but the anger of the former at being deprived, by Murray and his 'French party' council, of the assembly that would have given them control of the colony's affairs. In Murray's view, probably correct, an assembly would have been to the disadvantage of the vast French majority, ineligible for office as they were because of their religion. In the short run, of course, Murray was the loser. The mounting complaints of the merchants, more than anything else, led to his recall in 1766. Nevertheless Murray and his supporters had jarred their London masters into some awareness of the problems on the spot. The new Governor, Guy Carleton, though he arrived in Quebec convinced of Murray's folly in refusing to accede to the merchants' demands for an assembly and the elimination of all French law and customs, soon came around to his predecessor's view. As his awareness of the problems grew, Carleton looked for workable solutions. In 1770 he returned to England to press his ideas, and many of them were incorporated in the Quebec Act of 1774.

For a time, however, there was a honeymoon. Carleton, sympathetic to the dislocations of trade caused by the restrictions in force in the Indian territory and concerned that the French still on the Mississippi might be the winners, backed the Montreal merchants' demands for a free policy that would allow a return to the traditional methods of taking goods to the Indians. London finally gave in, turning regulation of the territory over to the colonial governments concerned. With this move, the natural superiority of the St. Lawrence system in the *pays d'en haut* reasserted itself; any threat there might have been of competition from the Mississippi ended, and in Albany and Schenectady many of the American traders turned with the trade. The chiefs among them, Phyn and Ellice, began to ship through Quebec and Montreal, and others followed suit. Efforts in New York to curb the Canadian trade predominance failed and, with the Quebec Act of 1774, political control of the Ohio country was given back to Quebec and the St. Lawrence system.

To sum up the immediate post-conquest period, the Treaty of Paris and the subsequent Proclamation of 1763 turned over to Britain all French territory on the North American mainland (excluding, of course, Louisiana, which comprised a much greater area than the present state of that name). Thus the Treaty marked the permanent withdrawal of France from continental North America. In actuality, due to the stirrings of discontent in the Thirteen Colonies, whose residents were slowly moving inward from the Atlantic coast, south of Canada, Britain looked to the Canadians to control the lands to the west of the existing colonies. The Proclamation of 1763 had not taken this into account, but had set the Quebec border not far west of the Ottawa, to the traders' and merchants' disgust. To the Canadians, however, all this territory was part of the *pays d'en haut*, the land of the fur-trader and *coureur de bois*. The discoverers of this vast wilderness had been missionary-explorer priests and men of the stamp of DuLhut, LaSalle, and others, whose place of origin and point of departure had been Montreal. For some years to come the fur-traders would prosper. As has been said, for economic reasons many non-Canadian traders preferred to sell and ship through Montreal and the St. Lawrence system, a fact that explains the vision of an 'empire of the St. Lawrence'. Such an 'empire' might have been possible had the British and the Canadians been able to defend and settle the western hinterland. All that can be said is that they failed.

The Quebec Act of 1774 changed the western boundaries of the province of Quebec and confirmed its political control over the 'Ohio country'. Under its terms the border of the new province would run along the southern shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, westward to the

banks of the Ohio and Mississippi. To its authors at least, this confirmed their belief that Montreal would live in unprecedented prosperity and that the 'empire of the St. Lawrence' would be the dominant factor in North American economic life. For a time there was truth in the assumption, but it was no more than a passing phase. The re-drawing of the boundary lines of certain of the American colonies, in the belief that creation of the enlarged province of Quebec would block expansion of the Thirteen, only helped to trigger their final exasperation with imperial authority – a last straw, leading to the split with the mother country that would open a new, and a new kind of, chapter in the story of Montreal.

As events showed in the succeeding years, boundaries were far from being the most important aspect of the Quebec Act for the residents of Quebec. It wrote into law the secure rights of Roman Catholics in their religion and of their clergy to collect the tithe. Thanks to the pacifying liberal action of Murray, Gage, and other post-conquest governors, followed by the conversion of Carleton to their views, no attempt was made to tamper with the French language. The Act confirmed retention of French civil law and of seigneurial rights (the latter later removed). It also introduced British criminal law, much less harsh than its French counterpart which the habitant had known before. Such matters as these were what occupied the minds of the burgher in the town and the farmer in his fields. To them the 'Ohio country' was faraway *terra incognita.*

Quebec now had its own Magna Carta, a charter which has survived the intervening decades since what must still be viewed as the most amicable 'occupation' in the history of arms, following the peaceful surrender to Amherst in Montreal and the return-to-the-womb beyond the Atlantic of the so-called French and even Canada-born élite, including the native Governor Vaudreuil. For all France cared, the habitants on their *trente arpents de neige* could work out their own destiny as best they could.

10 Better the Devil Known

The anger of the English-speaking Montreal merchants at once again being deprived of the assembly dear to their hearts was, though heartfelt, drowned in the roar of anguish from the American colonists. In Boston and elsewhere in the Thirteen Colonies the Quebec Act was read by the more extreme malcontents as the last stinging dash of salt in raw wounds. It followed Townshend's 'coercive acts' and became lumped by the older colonies with that agglomeration which has come down to us as Britain's 'intolerable' acts. These acts had been designed by the men in London to rationalize at long last that British Empire 'conceived in a fit of absence of mind'; yet they asserted a supremacy of Parliament not previously spelled out in so many words and thus never regarded as a serious threat to the still undefined liberties of the colonists. Taxation for the regulation of trade; perhaps – even if no one was entirely sure what Burke meant by 'virtual representation'. Taxation for revenue without what every good New Englander understood by representation; never, sir!

The territorial redefinitions of the Quebec Act were bad enough. They seemed once again to hem the Yankees in behind the Appalachian chain beyond which, in fact, many had already passed in search of new

lands. Yet they were worded flexibly enough so they could be regarded as expedient and subject to change. What most fitted the propagandist spirit of Boston's revolutionary zeal were the provisions guaranteeing the Catholic religion and French civil law in the new province of Quebec. Anything smacking of popery rubbed every staunch New Englander very much the wrong way. 'The late act of Parliament for establishing the Roman Catholic religion and the French laws in that extensive country,' ran the Resolves of Suffolk County in the province of Massachusetts Bay, 'is dangerous to an extreme degree to the protestant religion and to the civil rights and liberties of all America.'

Even as these Resolves were made during September 1774, the delegates to the First Continental Congress were gathering in Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love. Repeal of the Quebec Act, among many other things, they said, is 'essentially necessary in order to restore the harmony between Britain and the American colonies'. For the Act abolished 'the equitable system of English laws, and erected a tyranny there, to the greater danger . . . of the neighbouring British colonies, by the assistance of whose blood and treasure the said country was conquered from the French'. The words of these men were soon to be much harsher.

Boston may have been the hotbed of revolutionary propaganda but hot words were becoming more and more the pattern everywhere in colonies coming closer to a breakaway from imperial authority.

The moderation of that first Congress was replaced by an inflexibility at least equal to that of the Lords of Trade when the port of Boston was closed in retribution for the notorious Tea Party. When, in the spring of 1775, the British sought to carry out punitive actions against the Massachusetts upstarts by sending the Redcoats in, and the humiliating skirmishes of Lexington and Concord followed, the die was cast. Enter Montreal – for, before the formal Declaration of Independence at the Second Congress in Philadelphia, the wisdom of securing the northern and western flanks of the old colonies was apparent, and Montreal was a strategic key. In addition, it was hoped that the lure of independence might bring a positive response both from the dissatisfied Montreal and Quebec merchants of English or American stock and, for different reasons, from George III's 'new subjects' of the French tongue.

In fact, more than a few Montreal merchants *did* reflect the rebellious views of their opposite numbers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Nevertheless, their position was different. For one thing, they were in a small minority in the province of Quebec; for another, they had already moved into the old *pays d'en haut*, now part of the province, in a big way – and their lines of credit ran to London. Still, they listened

to the arguments of John Brown, an agent of the Congress, and the response of some, at least, was sufficient to encourage the men in Philadelphia.

In Montreal in 1774 a committee of merchants reacted against the Quebec Act with a petition protesting the loss of English civil law. Names like Todd, Price, and Blake were on the petition and so was that of Thomas Walker, a merchant out of Boston who had come to be regarded by the authorities as the ringleader and first 'revolutionary' among the dissatisfied Montreal mercantile group. Walker had come to the colony early and was a man of considerable substance. His arrogance towards the military was as vehement as theirs could be towards traders and tradesmen, and had resulted, while Murray was still Governor, in an incident which Walker, at least, could not forget. He had offended officers of the English garrison billeted in his house – one of the best in the town – and they had responded by arriving masked in his dining room, terrifying his wife and household. In the long legal wrangle that followed, the suspects escaped prosecution by being posted away with their regiment, and attempts to trap Walker into the commission of any anti-British or pro-revolutionary act also failed. But it left a thoroughly bad taste in the mouths both of the officials inherited by Carleton and of the more aggressive merchants, who felt their legitimate interests were being thwarted. It was not surprising, then, that Walker became the key man among the English-speaking supporters of the revolution in Montreal. When blandishments were being put forward from Philadelphia, a statue of George III in Montreal was decorated with a rosary of potatoes and a placard reading, 'Here is the pope of Canada and the English fool.' It was not surprising that the finger of authority pointed at Walker and his friends, though the words on the placard were French.

Thus, the Continental Congress felt with some reason that a favourable response awaited whatever force might be dispatched to the province of Quebec. Their views had substance, as far as a part of the mercantile interest was concerned; their assumptions that the stirring of the spirit of liberty among the French would be as strong, if not stronger, overlooked their own anti-Catholic propaganda. Unfortunately for them, it was the point that had not been missed among the French-speaking subjects of the 'English fool': there was altogether too much of the spirit of Boston in the declarations of Philadelphia to make them believable. The Canadians at least knew what to expect from the English of London. It may not have been what they most wanted, but it was at least the word of the devil they knew. As for the Bostonnais, their words seemed to alter according to the audience. The result may

not have been loyalty to the English Crown, but, with a handful of exceptions, it was not one of militant sympathy to the Americans, either.

However, what the reaction might or might not be was uncertain in Montreal when the terms of the Quebec Act became known in 1774. As time passed and the rising revolutionary tide grew in the Thirteen Colonies, Carleton still hoped that the positive response of the clergy and the seigneurs would bear out his hopes. The views of the mass of the people were not apparent until pressure from the south was directly asserted. When the invasion from the south finally occurred, the habitants who took an active part were fairly evenly divided between supporters of the Crown and dissidents. The majority of Montrealers, however, took no direct part at all. And later, when France joined with the Americans against the British, the wait-and-see attitude remained predominant. To some of the English-speaking Montreal merchants, however, the revolutionary cause seemed initially more attractive.

The war approached the Quebec frontier with the taking of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, the traditional outposts, by Ethan Allen and Seth Warner, aided and abetted by Benedict Arnold. This opened the Lake Champlain–Richelieu gateway to Montreal and the people of the island community had no reason to be surprised when news reached them on May 18, 1775, that an invading force had reached St. Johns. Montreal bestirred itself, and a company of a hundred men under Colonel Preston was sent out to cut off the invaders. Indicative of the ambivalence of the merchants, however, was a warning taken to the American invaders by one Bindon, a Montreal merchant, who then agreed to carry a letter from Ethan Allen to the sympathetic mercantile element in Montreal asking for provisions in the name of liberty.

On his way back to Montreal Bindon met Preston's advancing column, rode away before he could be seized, and, back in the city, passed on the word of Preston's defeat. This was rather premature. Preston returned while a meeting was in progress and denounced the informant. Bindon, in danger of being lynched, denied any collusion with the rebels and, through profuse professions of loyalty to the British interest, managed, for the time at least, to pass the whole thing off as a misunderstanding.

In Montreal, that most undefendable of cities, the Loyalists began raising volunteer militia companies to meet the threat of invasion – real or imagined. The response was varied. Some of the commissioners designated to raise defence forces were stoned in the streets by women; there was no wholehearted flocking to the colours. On the other hand, fifty men were found who were ready to proceed to St. Johns and they were dispatched at once.

When Governor Carleton visited Montreal in June he was disturbed by the apathy of the Canadians – and, perhaps even more, by that of the Indians from Caughnawaga, who displayed the same indifference to the plight of the Crown. The vulnerability of Montreal to an advance from the south, the poor state of the city's walls, and the inadequacy of any likely group of defenders drove home the failure of a policy from which the Governor had expected a general rallying, particularly of the habitants. He had even gone so far as to dispatch a couple of regiments of regulars to the hard-pressed Gage in Boston. With the inevitability of an attack his dilemma was acute.

Nevertheless, he prepared to make the defence at the only points where it might logically succeed – the forts at St. Johns and Chambly. His bid came close to success. Earlier Gage had sought in vain from the imperial government in London the funds that would – or might, at any rate – have made Ticonderoga and Crown Point defendable. With the main defences on the route to Montreal lost, Carleton did what he could at St. Johns and Chambly. The first was stoutly built, even if of wood, and could withstand a cannonade. Major Preston had five hundred British regulars and another hundred volunteers, plus the support of a schooner lying in the Richelieu. Although he was cut off from Montreal, his supplies were substantial and the invading Americans under Montgomery were lacking in many necessities.

Fort Chambly should have been simple to hold against Montgomery's ill-equipped forces. It gave in on October 19. At St. Johns, Preston held out until November 2 – delaying the Americans fifty-five days and giving Carleton invaluable breathing space. In the meantime, an abortive bid by Ethan Allen and a Major Brown to take Montreal by simultaneous attacks from east and west ended in a fiasco. Allen was taken prisoner after his Green Mountain Boys had easily been repulsed by the Montreal militia near Longue Point and the 'general' was confined to the hold of one of Carleton's ships. However, the fall of Chambly and St. Johns left the route to Montreal open and, with the regulars gone, resistance to any sizeable force was futile. In late autumn Carleton slipped downriver past a battery that the advancing Americans had established at Sorel; with him he had just enough men to row a small boat with muffled oars. His schooners were left behind and Montgomery, admitted to Montreal with a considerable show of support by groups of French and disaffected English merchants like Walker, made use of the ships soon after to move his army to Quebec. There he joined Benedict Arnold in the siege of the old capital, which remained the key to control of Quebec.

A makeshift force, hastily put together by Carleton from the handful

of regulars who remained in Quebec plus seamen from the ships and volunteers, both French and English, from the populace, routed the only serious assault made by the besieging Americans. Montgomery was killed, Arnold wounded. Through the icy winter the numbers of the investing Americans – those who had not died or been taken prisoner in the Christmas assault – dwindled from sickness, desertion, or the lapse of their limited service. By spring, with the arrival of strong British forces from England, they were fortunate to be able to withdraw at all. Only the delay of the British pursuit made possible the escape of any of Arnold's ragtag army.

Meanwhile, a small garrison of Americans had wintered at Montreal. Whatever enthusiasm had greeted their arrival in the autumn had long since been dissipated. While originally they had offered brave promises and hard money, they had been reduced to slogans whose meaning grew weaker as their ability to pay for supplies declined and discipline loosened.

At the height of their success in Montreal, Montgomery's Continentals, as the Americans came to be called, had gone a considerable way to winning over the populace. Under the terms of capitulation signed by leading members of the community, freedom of religion and the equality of the French and English tongues were guaranteed. Freedom of trade with the interior was granted, but the Americans denied the Montreal mercantile group intercourse with London. For that they could hardly be blamed, but, for a substantial group of the men already deeply involved in the trade of the St. Lawrence route, the severance of ties with their natural market was a serious blow. As Professor Creighton stresses in *The Empire of the St. Lawrence*, it gave them serious pause. Without the British connection their economic base was gone; they would become at best junior partners of mercantile interests in Albany and New York and they were already too deeply committed to the future of the St. Lawrence to contemplate that.

Therefore, while there was no overt resistance, there was also little enthusiasm for the occupying force. The active support of men like Thomas Walker was the exception rather than the rule. If the majority of the Montreal traders did not do battle, neither did they do anything to help the rebels from the south. For the most part non-fraternization was the order of the day. A few hundred habitants showed sympathy towards the invader – some by actively joining forces with Ethan Allen's ragged irregulars, more by providing food and other necessaries. But the revolutionary slogans were not the cause, even among people who had read Voltaire and the *idéologues*. For most it was a matter of hoping to choose the winning side. It is necessary, then, to reiterate that

the general attitude of Montreal towards the Revolution was apathy. The enthusiasm of John (?) Price, who made a donation of £20,000 to the American army, must have turned to rue when the Continentals began paying their bills in scrip as worthless as that left behind by the men of Louis XV when they departed. Finally, when the city began to grow short of supplies, there were few who did not look forward to the return of the British.

The weakness of the American position became apparent, with word that Quebec had withstood the siege and with the knowledge that the arrival of the spring ships from England would complete whatever Carleton's scanty garrison, winter, and disease had failed to finish. The threat to the predominance of Britain in the province of Quebec from the revolting colonists to the south had become negligible. The help they had received both from small groups of sympathetic habitants and from a segment of the Montreal merchants evaporated. All in all, the political ramifications of the invasion had been close to nil. When the British returned there was no retribution against the habitants, and Carleton noted that only twelve persons of any consequence had so compromised themselves that they felt it advisable to take their leave with the remnants of the Yankee forces. Of these, Thomas Walker appears to have made himself as obnoxious to the revolutionaries as he had to the British; but he was so far compromised that Benjamin Franklin helped him to leave, to save him from the hangman's noose.

Franklin had come to Montreal in April 1776 in an effort to persuade the Canadians to become the fourteenth state. His presence during the occupation has always been a matter of interest, and it represented the most serious attempt to win over the Canadians to the cause of 'liberty'. With him had come other men of substance and considerable acumen: Samuel Chase of Maryland; Charles Carroll, said to have had a fortune of between £150,000 and £200,000, which must have made him one of the wealthiest men in the old colonies; and Carroll's brother, John, later to become the first Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore. Whether these men might have had more success had they reached Montreal earlier is an interesting line of speculation. However, they were delayed at St. Johns, and by the time they reached Montreal the end was near.

They stayed with Walker in his fine house near the Château de Ramezay. In the Château itself, used as headquarters for the inept 'American' commander, General Wooster, they installed a printing press operated by Fleury Mesplet to publish their propaganda. (Mesplet, a Frenchman via New England, was to remain on and become the first printer in Montreal; his paper, the *Gazette*, despite a number

of 'gaps' in publication, still survives.) But the constitutionalist arguments of the American spokesmen were either incomprehensible to Canadians unfamiliar with notions of republican liberties, or too late, or both. Even John Carroll's efforts to win over the clergy fell on ears that were deaf to such uncertain blandishments after the guarantees proffered in the Quebec Act two years before. The priests were all too aware of the earlier American protest which had called their faith 'a religion that has deluged [Britain] in blood and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion throughout every part of the world'. Congress's offers to the French subjects of Great Britain of a future free of 'tyranny' could not be balanced against such utterances.

Thus, on June 17, the last of the American garrison departed, and the next day Carleton returned. As the Yankees straggled back the way they came, an expedition of British reinforcements which had arrived with the spring ships followed and came close to cutting them off. Delay on the part of Carleton has been blamed for the fact that the majority got away. Whatever the case, he resigned on June 27, though he was not formally relieved by Haldimand until the following year.

So much for that invasion of Montreal and the vast area of land defined by the Quebec Act of 1774. However, the Revolutionary War had barely started. What seemed a high point in British fortunes soon changed, and there were to be stirrings again in a small way among 'interest' groups both in Montreal and in the rest of the province.

Throughout the years that followed, during which British arms in America suffered increasing reverses, culminating in the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1780, there were numerous rumours of impending invasions from the south, with the usual alarums in Montreal. For a variety of reasons none materialized: France, which entered the war in 1777, did not want the Americans to control the whole vast area from north of the St. Lawrence to the Gulf; the Americans were loth to have Quebec back in French hands.

Montreal returned to something of the glorious days of old, when it was a French base for operations against the British, with social activities centred around men in scarlet rather than blue and under the Union Jack rather than the fleur-de-lis.

After France entered the war on the American side, there grew up something of a French party in the province of Quebec. Stories of espionage became common currency in Montreal, and a few alleged ringleaders were imprisoned under Haldimand's orders and held without trial for some time in Quebec. However, their imprisonment was mainly in the nature of house arrest, and several of them were allowed to correspond freely with the world outside and even to conduct their

businesses. From the point of view of this party, the most encouraging sign was a proclamation from Admiral Count d'Estaing, issued in October 1778 in the name of Louis XVI, in which he told the Canadians of Quebec: 'You were born French. There is no other House so august as that of Henry IV of the Bourbons under which the French can be happy and serve with delight.'

After reminding the Canadians of their glorious service under Montcalm and Lévis he warned that the strangers from another hemisphere would sooner or later treat them as a conquered race. 'I will not suggest,' d'Estaing added, 'to a whole people when it is gaining the right to think and act, and understand its interest, that to link itself with the United States is to seek its happiness.' Nevertheless, he urged the Canadians to support all those resisting British rule in America. The hint of an eventual return to French rule was unmistakable, and it roused concern in Congress. It also caused Haldimand anxiety and he noted 'a visible alteration in the ranks of all men'; especially, he had 'for many months observed in the Canadian gentry an expectation of revolution'.

Haldimand's concern was heightened by renewed dissatisfaction among some of the English merchants of Montreal, who drew up still another petition in April 1778, renewing their protests against the Quebec Act and blaming it for 'the dangerous and confused situation in this colony', once again uttering their demands for a 'free government by an assembly'. It was the old cry, presumably reinforced by the hope that Haldimand's uneasiness might lend it new weight. But this did not happen. By 1780 Haldimand had come around to the view of his predecessors that the Act had been salutary.

> It requires little penetration [he wrote] to discover that had the system of government solicited by the old subjects [the merchants] been adopted in Canada, this colony would in 1775 have become one with the United States of America. . . . On the other hand, the Quebec Act alone has prevented, or can in any degree prevent, the emissaries of France from succeeding in their efforts to withdraw the Canadian clergy and noblesse from their allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain. . . . The Quebec Act is a sacred charter granted by the King and Parliament to the Canadians as security of Religion, Laws, and Property.

It is apparent now that Haldimand had overestimated the appeal of the Quebec Act during the invasion of 1775–6. But, in the succeeding years, instruction of the people by the clergy had undoubtedly had its effect. Doubtless a repeal of the Act, as sought by the English-speaking merchants, could only have seriously alienated the Canadians and invited invasion from the south. As it was, with little in the way of sedition

in Montreal or Quebec, British rule remained relatively secure – even after the disaster of Saratoga Haldimand managed to maintain that security with a minimum of regular troops.

The possibility of Quebec's becoming a fourteenth state ended long before the Revolutionary War was formally concluded on September 2, 1783. But the constitutional quarrel that the Quebec Act had sought vainly to resolve was reopened soon after with the influx of thousands of Loyalists of Anglo-Saxon stock and traditions. For the Loyalists came north, not through any love of absolute monarchy, but simply through a dislike of republican ideas. They were just as conscious of the virtues of representative government as the successful revolutionaries they left behind.

11 The Fur Barons, the Loyalists, and 1812

'God save us from our friends,' the merchant-adventurers of Montreal might well have uttered fervently in 1783 when they learned of the terms of the Treaty of Paris that ended the American Revolution. For, if the Treaty ended the threat of a new invasion of Montreal, it also assured, probably forever, the role of junior partner for Canada in the economic development of North America.

In retrospect, it seems almost miraculous that for so many years after 1783 the merchants of Montreal were able to make as much as they did of their unnaturally restricted circumstances – circumstances that went against geography, against a pattern of trade whose rationale had been recognized only ten years before in the Quebec Act, and, in fact, against the whole logic of horse-trading that has been a basic factor in the making of treaties between nations since men began drafting them. Once again deprived of their natural hinterland, and this time perman-

ently, the men of Montreal and Quebec succeeded first in reorganizing a fur trade forced out of its natural pattern and then, as Loyalist settlement spread along the Upper St. Lawrence and the shores of Lakes Ontario and Erie, in becoming the entrepreneurs for the eastward movement of the produce of the new colony and the westward flow of supplies for its agricultural freeholders. And as a mark of their success came the growth of Montreal from a small provincial town to one of the world's great commercial centres.

But Lord Shelburne appears to have known as little about human nature as he did of the new situation in North America. His actions in the context of the Treaty of 1783 were those of a man who seemed to believe that making generous concessions to the newly born United States would result in similar acts in return. They did nothing of the kind. One outcome was that the haphazard drawing of boundary lines (closely corresponding to those of today) created a condition that could have no possible result but to make Canada the lesser of the two powers ultimately to share the North American continent. It was as if Shelburne had looked at a map, noting the run of the forty-fifth parallel, and said to himself, 'Now, there's a nice convenient place to draw the line,' and so it was drawn, with a few exceptions, as in the case of the section destined to become New Brunswick. Simple reasoning suggests that the Americans wanted no part of the remaining Acadian French, whereas loyal Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island would first have to be subjugated by the new United States, which already had too much on its hands to want to embark on any such adventure. If the British in London accepted the boundary lines which became final, it can only be put down to their negotiators' abysmal ignorance, almost comparable in its way to the manner in which France had as good as thrown away its *trente arpents de neige* in the 1760s.

But the merchants of Montreal, the men best in a position to provide the impetus for a forward policy in what was left of British North America, understood the vital issues; they were appalled when they learned the terms so casually reached with the canny Franklin and others in order 'to make the Americans grateful'. For the entire western section of the St. Lawrence–Great Lakes system, a natural political as well as economic entity, was hacked down the middle as casually as a man might split a log. The posts of the Ohio country and of Michilimackinac and Grand Portage, whence the one staple trade of Canada – furs – operated, were handed away without so much as consultation with those who understood their significance. And they were posts which it had been utterly beyond the resources of the rebelling colonies to capture; nor, for that matter, were they able to occupy them until,

some thirteen years after the treaty, the British finally moved out their tiny garrisons. Thus were the loyalties of Indian allies and Canadian colonials repaid.

Nevertheless, history is not made up of might-have-beens, Montreal's any more than any other. Survive and prosper the city did. During the years of grace before the posts were evacuated, and later, the fur barons and their colleagues exercised their ingenuity, and, by emulating their French-Canadian predecessors, they followed other river systems and portages. Alexander Mackenzie of the North West Company reached first the Arctic Sea and then, in 1793, the Pacific, after one of history's great overland adventures. For the history of Montreal through these decades after the Treaty of Paris was, much as it had always been, the history of what is now the nation of Canada. For many a long year Montreal continued to pump the blood that made a nation possible – and she became a stronger and prouder heart in doing so. That she was able to develop into a robust entrepôt before the predestined triumph of the behemoth to the south was in fact the outcome of what Shelburne, something of an economic modernist for his day, failed to do. The British mercantile system remained more or less in force for another half century, and the advantages accruing to what was left of the old St. Lawrence empire made Canada sufficiently viable economically to enable the continuation of an important east-west trade to and from London, via Montreal.

Some reference has already been made to partnerships, of varying degrees of equality, formed between the British or American entrepreneurs who came to Montreal after the conquest and Canadians with experience in the *pays d'en haut*. Though trapping and trading proper took place hundreds or thousands of miles from Montreal, the town remained the commercial centre. Even during the period when unsympathetic military governors discouraged, if they didn't actually bar, the trade, the ingenuity of those interested kept it going in one degree or another.

Just how the transition occurred is worth recording, and the late Professor Harold A. Innis, in *The Fur Trade in Canada*, cites an excellent example in the alliance of the redoubtable Alexander Henry and J. B. Cadotte.

> Although Henry and other traders suffered serious losses because of the Indian wars in the days of Pontiac, they rapidly became acquainted with the methods of the trade as conducted from Michilimackinac and assumed active direction. In 1765 Henry secured the exclusive trade of Lake Superior from the Commandant at Michilimackinac. He purchased goods to the extent of 4 canoes, at

twelve months' credit for 10,000 pounds of beaver (two and sixpence per pound), engaging 12 men for 1,200 pounds of beaver, and bought 50 bushels of maize for 500 pounds. Entering a partnership with M. Cadotte at Sault Ste. Marie, he wintered at Chequamegon sending a clerk with two canoes to Fond du Lac and through the great scarcity of European goods secured 150 packs of beaver of 15,000 pounds besides 25 packs of otter and marten skins. The success of the partnership of Henry and Cadotte was symbolic of the necessary combination between English capital and French experience.

The essence of the French experience was, of course, their technique of dealing with the Indian trappers in the most effective way possible – taking much-sought European manufactures to the areas of Indian settlement via a network of posts along the Lakes system. It had enabled the pre-conquest Canadians to maintain the trading initiative in the face of what was a potentially overwhelming superiority from the English traders on Hudson Bay. But the sedentary policies of the Hudson's Bay Company – waiting for the Indians in 'factories' near their great inland sea, or not far away on rivers leading to it – lost them the best fruits of their geographical advantage as far as the northwest trade was concerned.

It was this essential of the pre-conquest pattern that the British entrepreneurs in Montreal were quick to grasp, exploit, and expand. As the old southwestern areas, declining in importance anyway with the disappearance of prime fur-bearing animals and the advance of American settlement, were lost politically, the initiative of the men of Montreal had already won them the same predominance in the northwest that the French had had forty years before. What occurred was a renewal of the battle with the Hudson's Bay Company by the economy based on Montreal but removed even farther to the northwest.

The Montrealers were anything but a united force; for two decades or more after the conquest they fought among themselves as much as they fought the Bay. But the expense of taking trade goods west and bringing furs east by canoe grew as the Montrealers paddled ever farther towards the Pacific Ocean; internecine struggles became prohibitive to trade. Out of this came a series of loose mergers known to history as the North West Company, and through the 1790s and the War of 1812 to the final merger with the Bay in 1820, the Nor'Westers tended to retain the initiative – not only against the Hudson's Bay Company but also against their major American rival, John Jacob Astor.

In Montreal, from soon after the conquest through the heyday of the North West partnership, there were innumerable mergers and splits,

and much hard dealing and trickery among this group of men who, in pursuit of fortune, wrote a chapter in daring, courage, and continental vision almost unmatched in Canadian history. Reminiscent of the days of the fur fairs and of Frontenac and LaSalle were the departure ceremonies at Lachine each spring as the huge flotillas of canoes set out to meet the canoes from the western posts; in the beginning the meeting place was at Michilimackinac and the Grand Portage at the Canadian head of Lake Superior, and then, after the handing over of these posts, at Fort William at the Lakehead via the Ottawa and Georgian Bay, or up the St. Lawrence and through the Lakes.

The traditional habitant songs rang out as paddles churned the still-icy spring waters and the heavily laden canoes moved steadily out of sight – the songs of the voyageurs, on whose muscular shoulders 'ultimately . . . rested' the trade, 'the short, thickset, black-haired descendants of the northern French peasantry', inventive, imaginative and, above all, brave. With each flotilla would be a few *bourgeois* – as the partners were known – bound for Fort William, or perhaps for long winterings on the plains beyond. Men like the veteran Alexander Henry, Thomas and Joseph Frobisher, Simon McTavish and his nephews, the McGillivrays, James McGill, Alexander Mackenzie, and Simon Fraser, to cite but a few.

In the city itself these men were known for their wassailing companionship in that most famous and exclusive of fraternities, the Beaver Club. The Club, which met in various taverns but especially Dillon's, was formed in 1785, originally of nineteen members who must have wintered at least once in the Indian country. It later grew to fifty-five, with ten honorary members, the latter lacking the wintering qualification. The Club season began on the first Wednesday in December and continued until the end of April. Attendance at fortnightly meetings was compulsory; only the worst emergency or illness would be taken as excuse for absence. The object as stated in the rules was 'to bring together at stated periods during the winter season a set of men highly respectable in society, who had passed their best days in a savage country and had encountered the difficulties and dangers incident to the pursuit of the fur trade of Canada'. These men were the artistocrats of the town and the trade, and the club's motto, Fortitude in Danger, expresses what Professor Creighton sees as hidden somewhere not far beneath the outwardly polite and bourgeois atmosphere of the small city, 'something unusual, reckless and primitive . . . These British Canadians were some of the last merchant adventurers of the western world. The type had been the first great creation of the capitalist revolution in the West; but while it grew tamed in the centre of civilization, it

acquired a fresh vitality in the outposts of empire and nowhere more so than in the valley of the St. Lawrence.'

The Beaver Club achieved the height of its activity in the years just before 1810. It would entertain the captains of the ships in port which were to take the furs over the Atlantic, or such visitors as John Jacob Astor (before his enterprise was locked in battle with the Nor'westers). Ethnic origin had no meaning. The English, Scottish, and American merchants learned and used the language of their predecessors and partners and a number of the members were of French stock. The Canadians of the trade, British and French, got along well, intermarrying and leading much the same social life, whether in the Beaver Club or elsewhere.

The coming of the United Empire Loyalists – those fifty thousand or more men and women who chose to remain subjects of King George rather than of the new republic to the south – had a profound effect on the history of this country. Some thirty thousand settled along the Atlantic and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, creating a new province, New Brunswick, and pockets in the Gaspé country where English names, and sometimes language, still predominate. Another seven thousand took up land along the upper St. Lawrence and north of Lakes Ontario and Erie and in the Niagara Peninsula. For Montreal their long-term effect was indirect, if important. Perhaps a thousand passed through the city during and immediately after the revolution. A few must have remained, but they did not change its character as a predominantly French town with a small English community almost entirely concerned with trade. Nevertheless, it was the influx of the Loyalists that was to alter the political structure of British North America that had grown out of the Quebec Act, and Montreal was at least as concerned as any other part of Canada in the new emphasis created by the Constitutional Act of 1791.

The complex thinking and negotiations that lay behind the Act are beyond our scope here; suffice it to say that the Loyalists brought with them a love of representative government, though they wished its fruits to be in the name of the Crown, and a tradition of freehold tenure which made them see the seigneurial land regulations still in effect in the province of Quebec as utterly foreign and unacceptable to free men. The Act finally passed granted the assembly for which the earlier English immigrants had been agitating since 1764. It also continued the Legislative Council of the Quebec Act and, for the Canadiens, the legal and religious rights set forth in that Act. As these extensions could hardly be reconciled with the aspirations of the Loyalists settling west of the Ottawa River, the men of London, in their wisdom, divided the

province of Quebec, using the Ottawa as the demarcation line, into the provinces of Upper Canada (today's Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec). Once again the constitution-makers of England, whatever the goodness of their intentions, had by a strange mixture of expediency and Whiggish notions of constitutionalism neglected to find a workable solution to the needs of Canada. Yet, if the Act contained more seeds of difficulty than of sense, it did at least lay the groundwork for the making of responsible government, though many a thorny political thicket had to be negotiated and the path came to be more and more obscured by aspirations divided on linguistic and religious lines.

The new province of Lower Canada was divided into twenty-one counties with incongruously English names, and four boroughs – the towns of Montreal, Quebec, Sorel, and Trois Rivières. As for the new assembly, the counties returned thirty-nine members, and, of the remaining eleven, four came from each of Montreal and Quebec, two from Trois Rivières, and one from Sorel. When the House met on December 17, 1792, there were sixteen members of British origin, a proportion more or less maintained for the next forty-six years. A Loyalist, Chief Justice William Smith, was made Speaker of the Upper House – the Legislative Council – which comprised sixteen members, seven of them French. The other non-elective branch of the new government, the Executive Council, had nine members, four of them French. Thus both the executive and the Upper House were weighted in favour of the 10,000 English in a population of 156,000 and as these bodies and the Governor could block the work of the assembly there is certainly substance to the view that the new Act loaded the dice in favour of the minority. At the same time, however, the fact that French civil and mercantile law was continued is one indication that the intentions of the Act's framers in London were not those of rabid anglicizers. Pitt seemed to believe that the 'superiority' of English law would eventually become apparent and thus willingly acceptable to the Canadiens. The latter, of course, clung to their own code as they clung to their religion, as their guarantee of ethnic identity. What the new Act did provide was the opportunity in the elective assembly for the majority to exert its influence to the full, and it was quick to learn the intricacies of British parliamentary practice. The assembly became the battleground where the future leaders of Canadian nationalism were blooded. Unfortunately, as time passed, the battle came to be drawn increasingly along ethnic lines.

In the first House, in 1792, however, the cordiality between the English minority and the French majority, in Montreal at least, remained. Of the four members returned, three were English: John Richardson

and Joseph Frobisher in the east ward, and James McGill in the west. Elected along with McGill was J. B. Durocher. During the first session some evidence of the friction to come was apparent in wrangling over the selection of a speaker (the English 'fraction' lost out with the choice of Jean-Antoine Panet), and also in the matter of the language of debates. French, of course, though commonly used in virtually every area of colonial life, had no official status. The English candidates for the speakership were all bilingual – much more fluently so than Panet. Verbal debate thus presented no special problems; the argument was over the keeping of the assembly's journals. Richardson and McGill, political leaders among the Montreal merchants, were prominent in the fight to assure that, while the journals should be kept in both languages, the English version should be considered official. Chartier de Lotbinière led in the battle for equal status. He argued that a key purpose in the division of the old colony was that, in Lower Canada, 'French Canadians should have the right to make their laws in their language, according to their usages, their notions, and the present situation of the country.'

A compromise, reached after considerable time, several amendments, and many speeches, ordained that, while all bills would be put in both languages before being read, members could make the presentation in whichever tongue they chose. The English text was ruled to be official in matters touching the criminal code (which was, of course, that of England), and the French where the issues involved civil law. Thus, though London considered English to be the only 'official' language of government, the two achieved *de facto* equality in 1792, even though legal recognition was not given until 1867.

One fact was made quite clear by Chartier de Lotbinière in his plea for equal status for the French tongue: there was no question of loyalty at issue – the Canadiens were 'English at heart' and loyal to the Crown even if they spoke no word of King George's language. Behind this and other similar protestations undoubtedly lay uneasiness in the minds of a majority of French Canadians – and especially of the leaders – at the course of events in their homeland, torn now by a bloody revolution seen by many as the very work of the Devil.

The revolution had, of course, already reached its warlike phase, and France was a republic, when in May 1793 Lieutenant-Governor Sir Alured Clarke referred to 'the unprecedented conduct of persons exercising supreme power in France'. His pejorative tone may have sounded a responsive chord in many French-Canadian hearts; nevertheless there were those in Lower Canada not unsympathetic to the aims of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* – or at least to the memory of the history of their

French homeland. American adventurers in touch with agents of the French revolutionary régime worked to exploit these sympathies, with more emphasis on the national interest in the war against England, perhaps, than in whatever France's philosophical aims may have been. These activities were to some extent balanced by the presence in Lower Canada of forty-five *emigré* priests who stressed from first-hand knowledge the anti-Catholic nature of the Revolution. And, though no large numbers were actively involved on either side, there was a series of incidents that were alarming enough to the people of Montreal and to the colony and its administrators.

One of the first was a threatened mutiny in the 7th Fusiliers stationed at Quebec – put down by threats of execution and by the lash. Then there were rumours of a filibustering raid on Canada from Vermont. Reports of a Masonic-type lodge allegedly behind the plot reached Lord Dorchester, now back in Quebec, in April 1794. This lodge in Vermont pretended to act under a charter obtained from a 'central lodge' in Montreal, giving the impression of widespread dissatisfaction through the colony. The central organization was imaginary, but the rumours of such activities led to the calling out of two thousand militia in Montreal and elsewhere in May. This, in turn, provoked another crisis. Of the seven thousand men considered fit for service, only nine hundred could be found to obey.

This was bad enough, but Montreal seemed also to be becoming a major centre of potential revolt. Armed inhabitants of the Côte des Neiges district resisted the militia callout. The atmosphere became tense. A pamphlet titled 'Les Français Libres à Leurs Frères les Canadiens' circulated in the city during the year. It called for insurrection: 'Canadians! Arm yourselves! Call to your assistance your friends the Indians! Count on the help of your neighbours and that of Frenchmen!'

In counter-action, organizations of French and British Loyalists known as 'constitutional associations' were created. Yet the trouble persisted. Three years later, in 1797, there were riots in Montreal against the enforcement of a *corvée*; these were considered to have been Jacobin-inspired. In the city nineteen persons were indicted, four for high treason. Of the total, eleven were convicted and sentenced (though not to hanging). Others absconded. In Quebec a man called David McLean (or McLane) was convicted for sedition, and executed on July 21.

Behind some of the rumours of impending invasions were the intrigues of Ira Allen, brother of Ethan Allen, the unsuccessful invader of Montreal (in 1775). He apparently had offered to foment revolution in Canada if the French would supply him with arms and at one point British ships intercepted a vessel, the *Olive Branch*, containing twenty

thousand muskets destined for North America. Allen claimed the weapons were for the Vermont militia; the British were not interested in making a martyr of him, and he was freed. He was also alleged to have been linked with McLean (or McLane) in that unfortunate's attempts at subversion.

Nevertheless, operating from secure bases across the U.S. border, American adventurers, aided and inspired by agents of France, did produce enough evidence of trouble – actual or potential – to keep Attorney General Jonathan Sewell constantly on the alert. These were anxious days for the inhabitants of Montreal, who could never be altogether certain who in their midst might be acting in sympathy with France. Obviously, few were prepared to compromise themselves without much more promise of the Americans' succeeding than ever appeared. Yet it is apparent that many a Canadien listened sympathetically to those seeking to foment trouble, and few acted as informers. Just how serious the trouble could have been was not put to the test until later: there was a British garrison in the colony, and Napoleon was unable to cross even twenty-five miles of the English Channel, let alone the Atlantic.

When the test did finally come with the War of 1812, whatever icing there may have seemed to have been on the French cake was removed by the direct military threat to the territory of Lower Canada from the United States. True, there was no formal American alliance with Napoleon; nevertheless, the War of 1812 was seen by most Montrealers and Québécois, and by many New Englanders of federalist persuasion, as virtually direct assistance to the Emperor.

The declaration of war by President Madison and Congress on June 18 stunned Montrealers. The colony was almost denuded of British regulars and, with the Peninsular campaign in doubt, there was no chance of reinforcement. Potentially, the American threat was overwhelming, and Montreal, key point on the line of communications to the west, was the most inviting strategic target in the Canadas. Yet the Americans moved against the city only twice throughout the entire conflict – withdrawing the first time, in 1812, from Lacolle without a shot being fired, and suffering ignominious defeat at Chateauguay in October 1813. What saved the city during 1812 and 1813 was the combination of incompetent American generalship and planning, the low morale of state militias, and the virtual neutrality of New England. Nevertheless, the threat was enough to unite British and French Canadians to each other and to the Crown, virtually without question.

Fundamentally it was British leadership, men of the calibre of General Isaac Brock, and the remarkable use of what regulars were

available that saved the day until reinforcement arrived in strength in 1814. The militia was at best an uncertain factor, especially in Upper Canada where most of the fighting occurred. Yet in Montreal there was immediate and enthusiastic response to the call for volunteers in 1812. The city provided three thousand militiamen, a number equalled by Quebec. Enough men for six battalions came from the Eastern Townships. Two thousand of the volunteers were sent at once to garrison a line of posts from La Prairie to St. Johns. Dearborn's advance from Plattsburg to Lacolle had these small garrisons on the alert, though his withdrawal as a result of the evaporation of what little warlike enthusiasm there had been among his militiamen kept the Montrealers from being tested.

Meanwhile, Brock's victory at Detroit had brought great jubilation to the city, especially in September when the American commander, General Hull, and about three hundred other prisoners were marched under escort through the streets. The Montreal *Herald* reported:

> At Lachine Captains Richardson and Ogilvie, with their companies of Montreal militia and a company of the King's, commanded by Captain Blackmore, formed the escort until they were met by Colonel Auldjo with the remainder of the flank companies of the militia, upon which Captain Blackmore's company fell out and presented arms as the General [Hull] passed with the others, and then returned to Lachine leaving the prisoners to be guarded by the Montreal militia alone.

General Hull was put up by Governor Prevost at the Château de Ramezay during his stay in Montreal. The other American officer prisoners were quartered in the Holmes Hotel, and the men were marched to the Quebec Gate barracks and guarded. The General was exchanged for thirty British soldiers and the remainder of the Americans were marched to prison at Quebec.

For a year all was quiet on the Lower Canada front, thanks to the anti-war – pro-British, at times – spirit of Vermonters and the people of northeastern New York. Montreal's participation in the hostilities took the form of assistance rendered at the Upper Canada posts by the *engagés* of the North West Company and the Indians they influenced – a not inconsiderable contribution.

Through most of 1813 the weight of superior American numbers was felt in the west with the burning of York (Toronto), the seizing of naval control of Lake Erie, and pressure on the Niagara Peninsula and along the St. Lawrence in the area of Kingston. In the autumn, however, the Americans attempted concerted action against the St. Lawrence Valley,

directed at Montreal. The bid found the Montreal militia well trained, well led, and in the case of the 'gentlemen's' units at least, well fed. A contemporary commenting on two companies formed of the 'gentlemen of Montreal' remarked:

> If their discipline was commendable their commissariat was beyond all praise. Long lines of carts were to be seen bearing in casks and hampers of the choicest wines, to say nothing of the venison, turkeys, hams, and all the other esculents necessary to recoup their strength under the fatigues of war. . . . There can be little doubt that a gourmand would greatly prefer the comfort of dining with a mess of privates of these distinguished corps to the honor and glory of being half starved (of which he ran no small risk) at the table of the Governor-General himself.

Among the Montreal-based units the most remarkable was the Voltigeurs Canadiens, a regiment of fencibles (regulars raised for wartime home service), which, even before the outbreak of hostilities, had been recruited to a strength of one thousand by Colonel Charles Michel de Salaberry, a French Canadian with long service in the British Army. Elements of this regiment played the key role in halting the Americans at Chateauguay on October 26.

The force they turned back was commanded by General Hampton and consisted of more than five thousand men with ten cannon. Against this Lower Canada mustered a mere eight hundred fencibles and militia supported by about two hundred Indians. Of these only about three hundred actually took part. Hampton had crossed the border with every expectation of success. His cavalry and light troops drove the Canadian pickets back along both banks of the Chateauguay River towards de Salaberry's men, who were covering a working party felling trees for an abatis. The Colonel promptly ordered fire opened on the American advance guard. In the words of General Prevost's dispatch of October 30,

> the enemy rallied and repeatedly returned to the attack, which terminated only with the day in his complete disgrace and defeat; being foiled at all points by a handful of men who, by their determined bravery, maintained their position and screened from insult the working parties who continued their labors unconcerned. . . . I particularly noticed the able support Lieutenant-Colonel de Salaberry received from Captain Ferguson in command of Canadian fencibles and from Capt. J. B. Duchesnay and Capt. J. Duchesnay and adjutant Hedder, of the Voltigeurs, and also from adjutant O'Sullivan of the sedentary militia and from Capt. La Motte, belonging to the Indian warriors.

The engagement took place a mere fifteen miles to the southwest of Montreal. It was a glorious day for the city and the men it had recruited against the invader. Coupled with a parallel victory at Crysler's Farm near Cornwall, it was also the end of the American threat. In 1814, with the arrival of seven thousand British regulars, veterans of the Peninsular War, Lower Canada was given its first opportunity to take the offensive. General Prevost decided on an advance against Plattsburg, but on Lake Champlain his offensive was 'drowned'. A United States naval force under Macdonough destroyed the British supply fleet on September 11. Prevost, remembering the disaster of Burgoyne at Saratoga in 1777 after he lost control of his supply route, decided to turn back. As far as Montreal was concerned that was the end of the war.

Ironically, perhaps, one effect of this experience – whose over-all result was to confirm the American Revolutionary settlement and the continuance of an independent British North America – was, in the words of Mason Wade, to weaken 'the British loyalty of the English in Quebec, while the French Canadians demonstrated much greater loyalty than they had shown in 1775'. The bellicose merchants, whose *engagés* and Indian allies had fought hard in the wilds of Upper Canada and regained all the old fur-trading empire, found it given away again at the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. 'Astor's growing dominance in the fur trade was reinforced, while the Montreal traders found their last resource in the North-West threatened by Lord Selkirk's settlements after 1812 in the Red River country and by the expansion of the Hudson's Bay Company, which absorbed the North West Company in 1821.'

Yet, out of the war, 'a new Canadian loyalty was beginning to spring up among both groups, who had fought together to repel invasion and whose doubts about the other had been dispelled by common effort. This new Canadianism was to be demonstrated in the years to come by a collaboration of members of both ethnic groups in favour of Canadian self-government and against British misrule.'

A fair summary – except, perhaps, for the fact that those against whom the battle for self-government and against 'misrule' was waged were more the upper class of 'old' Canadians in the Château Clique and Family Compact than they were the British. They were more British than the British, possibly, but the struggle was as much an internecine one as that between Tories and Patriots in the Thirteen Colonies had been so many years before.

12 Montreal Becomes a City

The War of 1812 confirmed that the northern half of the continent would be British, though the exact boundaries from sea to sea were not to be settled for years to come. Though its immediate aftermath brought a new sense of security to Montreal and a continuation of wartime prosperity for several years, the return to the *status quo ante bellum*, which was the outcome of the negotiations at Ghent, meant relinquishing territory that had been dominated successfully by the British and Canadians – in Maine, in the area south of the western Great Lakes, and on the Pacific Coast. This fact, coupled with Selkirk's triumph at the Red River, spelled the end of the North West Company and, with that, the end of Montreal's dominance of what, until the 1830s, had been the great staple trade: furs.

Nevertheless, the war – and it should be seen in the context of the over-all struggle against Napoleon – provided a significant fillip to the new staples that moved into the gap left when the centre of the fur trade switched to Hudson Bay, and gave Montreal a renewed *raison d'être* as a commercial entrepôt. The war also saw it grow into a centre of banking, insurance, and manufacturing in the years before the repeal of Britain's Corn Law Navigation Act struck hard at the Atlantic trading

pattern established for centuries under the French and British mercantile systems.

However, Montreal's bid for commercial pre-eminence had been undermined by the unnatural division of the empire of the St. Lawrence into two political entities, Lower Canada and Upper Canada. While the emphasis on furs continued, the essential weakness of the great inland waterway was not too apparent. As long as canoes were a viable means of transportation, the various rapids from Niagara to Montreal were not serious barriers. But, with a change in emphasis to the movement of agricultural and forest products, the need for larger carriers made the water hazards loom large. The failure of Lower Canada (which had the capital) and Upper Canada (which had growing farm surpluses) to co-operate in a canal system resulted in an increasing diversion of exports from the Great Lakes heartland to New York after the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. It also resulted in the diversion of the people best suited to open up the virgin lands of Upper Canada to the settlement of Ohio and Michigan. Migration from Britain increased, but many of these 'New Canadians' were ill suited to the demands of the country and, in Lower Canada at least, were regarded by the Canadians as a threat to traditional ways.

Finally, the restrictions on land development arising from seigneurial tenure and clergy reserves hampered commercial agriculture in the lower province, and, until a pact was reached with the Sulpician seigneurs in 1840, mercantile property development in Montreal itself was difficult.

Politically, these factors helped spur a resumption of the quarrel between the traditional agrarian and the expanding financial-merchant interests. Montreal, the growing commercial centre, became the focal point as well of political conflict and of the growing radical-national party of Patriote reformers, whose leader was the brilliant, erratic, and unstable Louis Joseph Papineau. While a parallel constitutional battle grew in Upper Canada between reformers and the so-called Family Compact, the Lower Canada struggle, especially in Montreal, was intensified by a tendency to polarize on ethnic and, to some extent, religious lines. Nevertheless, there were Englishmen in the Patriote camp and Frenchmen, including most of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, in the British (or Tory) party, the latter tending to revolve around the Governor and the appointed executive and legislative councils, whose leading personages were known, pejoratively, as the 'Château Clique'. Thus, though Quebec remained the government centre, Montreal became the centre of agitation and the focal point of the Rebellion of 1837.

Even though the period was one of growing political uneasiness and economic frustration, the city – it was incorporated in 1832 – continued

to develop and to take on the essential characteristics of the great commercial centre and world port it was to become. Despite years of depression, especially in the 1830s, the population grew steadily, both naturally and as a result of the coming of immigrants from the British Isles and from the farm areas of Lower Canada itself. From 9,000 people in 1800, the city grew to 16,000 after the War of 1812, 22,000 in 1825, more than 27,000 in 1831, and 57,719 in 1852. By 1867 the population was nudging 100,000 souls.

In 1817 the walls around the old city were demolished, and in succeeding decades the suburbs spread north, east, and west. These years also saw the construction of fine new stone houses and public buildings, striking examples of which remain in 'Old Montreal' to this day. It saw, as well, a gradual transition in building from stone to brick, especially in the suburbs; improvement and lighting of streets; installation, first, of a regular watch and then, thanks to Lord Durham, of a police force modelled on Peel's London bobbies; an efficient waterworks; harbour improvements; canal building; river dredging; steamboat transport on the river; and, finally, the first railway.

Some indication of financial and commercial development has already been given. Parallel growth occurred in religious, educational, charitable, and cultural areas. Montreal's ever-widening skyline continued to be dominated by the spires of her churches, as immigration brought new faiths and as the increasing Roman Catholic population outgrew even the spaciousness of the new Notre Dame Church, whose twin towers and eight great bells still remain a focal point of Old Montreal. During the years before the Act of Union in 1841, Montreal became an episcopal see of the Roman Catholic Church and, with the founding of McGill, a university city. It also became, or continued to be, a centre of lively (and often libellous) journalism, of theatricals and of varied sports and entertainments, of hotels, restaurants, and taverns, of patriotic societies and clubs. And, as it had always been, it remained a garrison town, with the advantages and disadvantages which the permanent presence of professional soldiery entails.

The first street directory, published by Thomas Doige in 1819, provides an enthusiastic description of the river community and its environs. Commending especially the view from the projected mansion of the North West Company's Simon McTavish on the south slope of Mount Royal (a building never completed), the writer deals first with the vista to the mountains of Vermont, of nearer villages and farms, and the ceaseless flowing waters of the St. Lawrence.

> On this spot, scarcely out of the buzz of the business of the town, which appears to lie immediately below it, you perceive the shipping in the harbour, the mechanic on his building, the agriculturist

in his fields and innumerable fine gardens and orchards, surrounding the various elegant seats belonging to the gentlemen of Montreal. All kinds of fruit found in European climes under similar latitudes, are produced in these gardens – the apples in particular are of a very superior quality; and some of them possessing a most delicious taste and flavour, are considered worthy presents to the best apple countries in Europe. The clear and extensive prospect of the River St. Lawrence, deemed one of the finest rivers in the world, with the shipping, steamboats and other craft navigating it; the extensive prairie on the other side of the river, the roads which are constantly covered with vehicles of commerce passing from & to the United States, afford a pleasing subject for contemplation, which will soon be improved by the serpentine waters of the canal to Lachine.

The advantages of rapid vegetation are felt here very particularly, and appear to atone for the great length of time the frost is in the ground – indeed, Montreal can scarcely be said to have more than 2 seasons, Summer and Winter. . . . The winter affords greater facilities for bringing certain articles of produce to Montreal market . . . and more business with the inhabitants of the interior is consequently done then than at any other time; when the river is frozen and the roads laid out on the ice, which generally is the case in early January, until the thaws commence in April. . . . The snow will scarcely be off the ground, ere the budding leaf peeps through the bark; quickly after the trees are in full blossom, the odour of which perfumes the whole neighbourhood, and the grain is high enough in the fields to be waving in the wind – at the same time shipping is beginning to arrive and the river is covered with craft, Durham boats, rafts of timber, lumber, etc., intended for the Montreal market. . . .

Montreal is considered a very healthy place. . . . Epidemic disorders are very uncommon, which is attributed to the great length and severity of the winters, when the thermometer will often be as low as 30 degrees below zero. So much cold weather, which is generally accompanied by a clear sky, tends to purify the town for a considerable time after; and the highly rarefied air, bracing the nerves and giving strength to the human system, enables it to bear the effects of hot summers with less danger. The improvements necessary in the department which has been in charge of cleansing the town, have lately become a matter of serious conversation; and when the highly important consideration of the health of the inhabitants being so immediately connected with its cleanliness and purity, has a fair chance against additional expense, or the employment of more efficient persons to perform this duty. . . .

The houses of Montreal, which at first sight are mostly of a forbidding aspect to a stranger are generally built of stone. . . . The

> old houses are of the fashion of those found in the ancient towns of France; but such buildings as have of late been erected are mostly of cut stone, built in the modern style possessing a very handsome appearance. Among the most prominent may be noticed the public edifices of the English Church, the Court-House, the Jail, which is placed in a very healthy situation commanding a view of the Champ de Mars and the surrounding fine open country; the Montreal Bank, and the Mansion House Hotel. There are many equally handsome . . . private houses. . . . Several brick yards are established, where very handsome and durable bricks are manufactured, and many extensive modern brick houses have been built, which for fashion and elegance, would not discredit the most beautiful squares in London.
>
> At the top of the New Market [the present Jacques Cartier Square] there is a monument erected of cut stone to the memory of the immortal Nelson. . . . The principal public buildings that have been sometime erected nearby are the R.C. churches & nunneries, the College of the Sulpicians and the Barracks [built to accommodate upwards of 1,000 troops, or about two battalions].

In addition to the College (also known as the Lesser Seminary), our writer observes, 'There are several smaller schools in different parts of the town, maintained principally by the Ladies' Benevolent Society; which with the private academies conducted in general by very able teachers, form the means of education Montreal affords.'

The recently built barracks stood near the old Quebec Gate – now, with the walls, torn down – and in addition to troop accommodations provided storerooms for munitions, equipment, and supplies. The old fort on Citadel Hill had gone and its heavy munitions and the military hospital were in the process of being moved to Grant's [St. Helen's] Island, then being fortified. Commanding the river approaches, the island had been bought from its seigneur to be made into the key defensive position for the town.

The harbour is said to be 'as safe as one could wish' but difficult of access, especially because of the swift St. Mary's current which long forced larger vessels to off-load well to the northeast of the town. Smaller craft could be towed from paths along the banks and, in later years, steamboats would buck the current up to the harbour proper.

At this point, of course, the North West Company was still trading in furs, but the 'principal branches of the export trade' were 'pot and pearl ashes, grain, flour, timber for masts and spars, square timbers, staves and lumber'.

The town and suburbs comprised about 100 streets 'and very few of them that are not built upon . . . the number of houses in the town being

2,500. The streets in general are narrow, some of them are paved with flagstones, the widest and best paved streets are Notre Dame and St. Paul. . . . It is expected soon the whole town will be well paved. Some of the streets are lighted at nights, and there is a watch or foot patrol.'

A new water system with cast-iron pipes, replacing the old and ineffectual wooden ones, had recently been installed, 'undertaken by Thos. Porteous, Esq., and others under the name of the Montreal Water Works Company'. There was a reservoir on Citadel Hill and water was pumped into the system by a steam engine. Pipes, buried deep enough so as not to freeze in winter, were being extended into the suburbs and it was expected that within a year – by 1820 – every house would have running water. This was regarded as one of the most remarkable developments in the town's history, for the first time guaranteeing water (especially in winter) to combat the perpetual ravages of fire. Among other things, it was expected that insurance rates would drop considerably, especially as a recent law required chimneys to be swept at least once a month. This, along with stone or brick construction and metal roofs, ended the days when a sudden fire might destroy half the town; yet stone guards continued to be erected at either end of buildings to keep flames and sparks from jumping.

> [Two principal markets are still in operation,] in which meat, vegetables, poultry, eggs and butter are vended. There is also a fish market and a hay market, where some wood is sold. The chief supply of wood is by rafts which are constantly arriving at Montreal from the upper parts of the province . . . which is generally sold at from 10 shillings to 15 shillings a cord. Tuesdays and Fridays are called the market days, but there is a partial market on every weekday when most articles may be had, but not so cheap nor in such abundance. Meat seldom exceeds 6d. a pound & even that is double the price it fetched 10 years ago. . . . In the winter codfish from Boston and places near there are brought frozen in snow – it sells from 3d. to 6d. a pound.

Thomas Doige's directory also notes that 'excellent accommodation' can be had by visitors in such places as the Mansion House, the City Tavern, the Montreal Hotel, Champ's Coffee House, and the British Tavern. In the Mansion House,

> assemblies . . . are held in a room which is not surpassed in size or elegance by any in the province. The principal public library . . . is established by subscription [and] is kept in the lower room of the north wing of the Mansion House Hotel, and belongs to a number of public-spirited gentlemen, who subscribed shares to form a capital to purchase it, for the laudable purpose of affording

every information to the inhabitants that might be obtained through so valuable a channel. It contains upwards of 7,000 volumes, among which are found many scarce and valuable works. There are other libraries in Montreal, some of which circulate their books, and 5 or 6 newspapers are published here, 2 in English and 1 in both French and English, the others in French alone. . . .

The principal public amusements are in the Assemblies and Theatre in the winter and in promenading the Champ de Mars in the summer evenings. By indulgence of the colonel of the regiment stationed here, the company assembled in summer time frequently are serenaded by the music of an excellent band. The theatre, situated in College St., is a stone building . . . the interior, which consists of boxes and pit, is very neatly filled up and is large enough to contain 600 or 700 people.

With the development of touring companies, Montreal later became a centre for professional theatre with well-known performers from the United States like Fanny Kemble. Charles Dickens was also to give readings during his famous visit to Canada after an American tour – but all this was in the future; the more spacious and luxurious Theatre Royal was not built until 1825. Meanwhile, amateur theatricals were performed by students of the Collège de Montréal and by garrison officers and their friends. In winter, balls and dances ('assemblies') were frequent.

To return to 1819, Doige's directory explains that while

formerly this town was considerably infested with beggars, who were licensed to this calling & wore badges to that effect . . . an active magistracy has at length conquered this pernicious custom & having procured the establishment of a work-house in which the poor are employed & supported, beggars are now confirmed vagrants & liable to be punished as such.

The Ladies Benevolent Soc. affords assistance to poor women in sickness & when lying in at their own dwellings & also aids in the education of poor girls. The bright example of superior benevolence evinced by the female sex in this institution, has at length aroused the energies of the gentlemen, who have lately caused a public Dispensary to be established, which the increase of the population & the difficulties of the times more than any additional no. of sick, had made very necessary. Indeed the clouds of prejudice that have so long enveloped the country and retarded its progress to become on a par with other equally important places, are now rapidly clearing away; and it is to be hoped that we shall shortly be considered equally philanthropic with the inhabitants of any other town as extensive and wealthy as this is known to be.

Despite the tone of self-satisfaction evident in some of this, anomalies were striking, and metropolitan enthusiasm was to a considerable extent rooted in a consciousness of the potential rather than in the remarkableness of the actual – except perhaps that at times any progress must have seemed remarkable in the light of the obstacles.

A visitor of the time of Doige's directory speaks of a 'growing island emporium' but records that to reach Montreal it was necessary to cross the St. Lawrence 'in a canoe hollowed out of a single log' and then to climb 'a steep and slippery bank' to attain the principal streets – St. Paul and Notre Dame.

After a night in the candle-lit Mansion House, 'kept by an Englishman who had transferred all that was desirable in a London coffee-house', in the morning he 'witnessed a scene of considerable activity caused by the carts and horses which are driven into the river as far as possible to obtain wood &c., from the boats, and they go out so far, the body of the cart is sometimes under water, and the larger sticks are drawn out with a rope.' Thanks to John Molson, whose brewery to the east of the town had provided the economic base for widespread commercial activity, including one of the early banks, there were 'seven steamers running between Quebec and Montreal, viz., Malsham, Swiftsure, Lady Sherbrooke (the finest boat on the line), Quebec, Telegraph, Car of Commerce and Caledonia. Passage $10 down and $12 up.'

St. Paul is a 'bustling business street' and Notre Dame 'more quiet, more genteel and better built . . . twenty-five feet wide and three-quarters of a mile long'. Nevertheless, because of the location of the town (a site chosen originally, of course, with an eye to defence) and the St. Mary's current, 'ships are sometimes delayed for weeks, only two miles from where they are to deliver their freight', and even the steamboats 'are sometimes compelled to procure the aid of oxen to draw them up'.

Nevertheless, Montreal continued to be marked by the restless spirit of the New World and drawbacks were regarded as made to be overcome. In the years of prosperity between 1815 and the slumps of the 1830s, Montreal secured its position as the financial and trading centre of the provinces of Lower Canada and Upper Canada. More sophisticated arrangements were necessary for money and credit, and led to the establishment of a banking system, whose first house, the Bank of Montreal, founded in 1817, continues to do business across the nation and the world to this day. It was soon followed by others, one of which, the Banque du Peuple, helped finance the unsuccessful Patriote cause in the Rebellion of 1837. The Bank of Montreal began as a private enterprise, but received its charter in 1822, in which year the Quebec

Bank and the Bank of Canada were also incorporated. The City Bank was begun in 1833 and the Banque du Peuple in 1835. A Montreal branch of the Bank of British North America was opened in the year of the Rebellion, and one of the Bank of Upper Canada in 1838. Montreal's commercial growth also saw the establishment of insurance companies: the Quebec Fire Insurance Company in 1818 and the Aetna in 1819, breaking a monopoly held by the Phoenix since 1804.

John Molson opened his brewery in 1782 and his steamship line in 1808. The retail drug business of Wadsworth and Lyman, started in 1800, became a wholesale house in 1829. The Ogilvie flour-milling operations had begun near Quebec, but were moved to Montreal early in the century. Dow & Dunn's brewery was opened in 1808 and a pioneer axe and tool industry was founded by John Frothingham in 1809. A foundry built in 1820 on Queen Street by John D. Ward built many of the steam engines used in river craft, and the first boot and shoe factory in the town was opened in 1824 by Alexander Bell. A hemp factory was in business in the following year.

The catalogue grows as the years pass. It is not our intention to write a business directory, but there is one general observation to be made. The entrepreneurs whose capital and efforts were behind so much of the economic development of the Canadas continued, as had been the case in the North West Company, to be mainly of Anglo-Saxon origin. Their fellow citizens of French origin already had begun to seek their prominence in the Church, in the professions, in politics, and, of course, in continuing land ownership, though the British-oriented entrepreneurs began in the 1820s to move tentatively into this area too. Their interest, however, was in commercial exploitation of undeveloped Crown lands, and not in farming itself, and was reflected in the abortive efforts to establish a Lower Canada Land Company. Significantly, the Canadien gentry would have nothing to do with the scheme. Considerable success was achieved by land companies in Upper Canada, but the system of seigneurial tenure and the opposition of the gentry hindered commercial land speculation in the lower province.

For a long time Montreal retained a monopoly on trade for the Canadas. Merchants followed settlement in Upper Canada, but they remained essentially agents for Montreal houses. Richard Cartwright of Kingston, one of the most solid and important of these men, explained their function.

> Not having a seaport in our province [he wrote to a London contact], it would be impossible or inconvenient for any person here to import goods except through the medium of a Montreal house. . . . The merchant sends his order for English goods to his correspon-

> dent at Montreal, who imports them from London, guarantees the payment for them there, and receives and forwards them to this country for a commission of five per cent, on the amount of the English invoice. The payments are all made by the Upper Canada merchant in Montreal, and there is no direct communication whatever between him and the shipper in London.

Thus, to the Montreal merchants and bankers went the lion's share of profit from the new trade, in staples like wheat, lumber, and potash, that replaced the fur trade with the merging of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies.

As we have noted, this change in the character of the trade accented the serious barriers of the St. Lawrence River rapids between Lachine and Kingston, and, of course, the monumental falls at Niagara. To those who saw and hoped to profit by the developing St. Lawrence, the need for canals was early apparent. Various ambitious projects were conceived, but no coherent system was put into effect until long after the Erie Canal had diverted the goods of the upper province through New York. Fundamentally, this was a result of the arbitrary division of the two Canadas. The Montreal merchants and the Upper Canada producers were anxious to make the river and lakes system navigable for bulk carriers; the French- and agrarian-dominated assembly in Lower Canada resisted. Despite the obstacles, some canal work was achieved. Between 1821 and 1826 a company headed by John Richardson, long one of Montreal's most prominent merchants and a spokesman for the English faction in colonial politics, built a canal around the Lachine Rapids. Money for the venture was raised privately, but large subsidies from the colonial and imperial governments were needed. The completed canal was eight and a half miles long. Six locks took vessels down the drop of forty-four feet between Lachine and Montreal. Their depth was five feet, their length ninety. They were twenty-eight feet wide at the bottom and forty at the surface and were of stone construction. Thus Durham boats and schooners could be handled. Unfortunately, however, the rapids farther up the river remained and no comparable canals were built for many years. These obstacles greatly reduced the importance of the Welland Canal when it was built in the 1820s to connect Lakes Ontario and Erie on the Canadian side. Nor was the Rideau Canal, something of an engineering marvel for its day, of much help. It provided a link via the Ottawa River between Montreal and Kingston, but it was roundabout and its locks were too small (its primary purpose was military and thus it had to be well away from the border). There were rapids on the Ottawa, too, and minor canals, like that at Grenville, were too small to handle heavy traffic. Thus no

satisfactory solution to the obstacles of the St. Lawrence system as a whole was found until long after the Erie Canal–Hudson waterway had assured the eminence of New York.

Nevertheless, the Lachine Canal seemed like a spectacular achievement in Montreal, certainly the most spectacular of the 1820s. Continuing, if less spectacular, progress was marked in the town itself. Street lamps burning whale oil were introduced, and from 1816 a stage coach service was in operation to Kingston. It was relatively fast and efficient, but too expensive for the ordinary man; walking – about twenty miles could be covered in a day – remained a common means of transport. English and Irish migrants helped swell the population as did a movement of habitants into 'the city' from the land. Some of the latter became prominent in the commercial life of the town. Joseph Masson, who walked to Montreal from St. Eustache in 1803, died fifty years later a millionaire. Pierre Berthelet made a fortune by renting stoves in winter. The residence of the Côté family was one of the town's most imposing.

The growth of population brought diversification of religious life. The first two Protestant churches, the Scotch (Presbyterian) Church on St. Gabriel Street and the Anglican Christ Church, date from the late eighteenth century. Bonsecours Chapel has, of course, continued in several manifestations from the seventeenth century to this day on its original site near the river. The present Notre Dame Church on Place d'Armes was the outstanding achievement in church architecture during this period. Built adjacent to the old Sulpician seminary, it replaced the old parish church and was designed to accommodate all the Roman Catholic faithful of the town. The architect was James O'Donnell of New York, and the cornerstone was laid in 1824. Much of the work was done voluntarily by farmers and others, who quarried stone at Côte des Neiges in the wintertime. The building was finished and the first Mass celebrated in it on July 5, 1829. The twin towers with their eight bells were not completed until 1843. Other churches built during these years include St. Andrew's, erected in 1807 on St. Peter Street; a Wesleyan chapel completed in 1809 on St. Joseph Street; the second and third Wesleyan chapels in 1833, all of them with schools attached; St. Paul's Presbyterian Church on St. Helen Street in 1834; a Baptist church in 1831; a Congregational church on St. Maurice Street in 1835; and a Jewish synagogue in the St. Lawrence suburb, built between 1835 and 1838.

The foundations of English literary and educational institutions were also laid during this period. A National History Society was founded in 1827, the Mechanics' Institute in 1828. The Protestant National School

opened in 1816, and the British and Canadian School and the Royal Grammar School were both in operation by the next year. In 1821 the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning obtained a charter for McGill College (endowment for which had been left by fur trader James McGill), though it was some years before the college actually functioned.

Broadening social service and philanthropic endeavour was also characteristic of the growing town. The Ladies' Benevolent Society was begun in 1815, the Protestant Orphans' Home in 1820, the Public Dispensary in 1819, the House of Recovery in the same year, and the Montreal General Hospital in 1822. About the same time Canada's first medical school was opened. A number of patriotic and other societies came into being, reflecting the varied ethnic nature of the population; the St. Jean Baptiste, St. George's, St. Patrick's, St. Andrew's, and German societies were all begun in 1834. A society for the promotion of temperance was founded in 1828.

Through most of this period Montreal continued to be ruled through its magistrates from Quebec, but as the nineteenth century progressed there was growing pressure in the town for the establishment of municipal institutions to deal with matters that were primarily of a municipal nature. As early as 1786, the Superior Council in Quebec had reported in favour of incorporation of the town by charter but nothing was done about it. From the end of the War of 1812 agitation for such a move increased. A large public meeting in October 1821 pressed for the change without success. Another, on December 6, 1828, put the demands more forcefully. Resolutions were passed insisting that continuing government by magistrates could no longer provide for the needs of a growing trade and population. Among the more evident inadequacies cited were the police arrangements, which were in the hands of a picturesque but hardly effective body armed with rattles and blue truncheons and known as 'the watch'. Equally pressing were the problems of appropriations of revenue, bookkeeping, and the unhealthy state of lands adjoining the water front. In spite of the formidable array of French and English names on the petition, the only result was the appointment of a harbour commission in 1831. However, on April 12, 1832, royal assent was given for incorporation as a city, and on July 18, 1833, City Council unanimously adopted as the coat of arms a device bearing a beaver, rose, shamrock, and thistle, and the motto Concordia Salus.

The new city was divided into eight wards – East, West, St. Ann, St. Joseph, St. Antoine, St. Lawrence, St. John, and St. Mary. Each elected two councillors, men with suitable property qualifications, and these

sixteen elected a mayor whose salary was not to exceed four hundred dollars. Jacques Viger was the first elected. Every man over twenty-one possessing real estate within the city limits had the right to vote in municipal elections. The city was given power to borrow, to acquire property, to take legal action and to be liable to prosecution, and generally to have all the powers formerly exercised by the magistrates or justices of the peace. The charter remained in force until May 1836 when, because of the prevailing political tension, it was not renewed. Powers reverted to the justices of the peace until 1840, when the charter was reconfirmed and became operative again.

Before 1836, even, politics had become the major preoccupation of most Montrealers, as is evident in a perusal of the newspapers of the time. The most eminent figure, when he was not in Quebec where he was Speaker of the Assembly or at his seigneury at Montebello, was Louis Joseph Papineau, a magnetic personality, eloquent but unstable, around whose person and opinions reformist dissent gathered until he became a legend in his own lifetime. Papineau's views were radical enough and owed a great deal to Thomas Jefferson's concepts of agrarian democracy – a liberal conception of the state; decentralization; the idealization of the small peasant proprietor; a hatred of England, of aristocracy, and of monarchy; revulsion against speculation and monopolies; and above all a North American destiny of democracy. Rousseau, Benjamin Constant, Lamennais, de Tocqueville, and Babeuf also influenced Papineau. Drawing inspiration from them, he proclaimed a program designed to expand the powers of the laity: separation of church and state, education by lay teachers, full freedom of religion.

> He insisted, too, [says Fernand Ouellet in his fascinating account of the Tribune of the People, 'Louis Joseph Papineau, A Divided Soul', a Canadian Historical Association pamphlet] on Lower Canada's democratic and North American destiny; at the very most he would have accepted some vague economic connection with Great Britain as the last step towards independence. But Papineau was not only a convinced and rigid republican, he was also an uncompromising nationalist. To see him only a liberal turned republican, as he himself pretended after 1830, is to misapprehend his career. He was the first French-Canadian nationalist, and his nationalism was rooted in his conservative tendencies. The herald of democracy could double as the hero of national independence. He set himself up as the spokesman of an oppressed people, attached to their past and their traditions, and anxious, as he asserted, for independence in order to preserve them. . . . He believed that by rallying around the banner of democracy they could one day take up their national destiny and deprive the Anglo-Saxon

> minority of all forms of solid initiative, even the possibility of recruitment through immigration. . . .
>
> But Papineau wanted his compatriots to avoid those risks which liberty and equality were made to run, even in the United States, by an excess of the 'commercial spirit'. He dreamt of a French-Canadian (this was the period when that expression first came into use) democratic state founded on a population mainly agricultural but moral, enlightened and prosperous.

Businessmen would be needed 'to sell Canadian farm products, either in the raw state or converted by numerous small industries, to those limitless markets which free trade would open up. But these new-style capitalists . . . would never be given the opportunity of turning into speculators or of reaping profits by a monopoly of the state machinery.' He saw leadership from an élite of the liberal professions and believed it would be more than a counterweight to the merchants and seigneurs.

> Nevertheless, in Papineau's scheme of thought, the social equilibrium would rest on two fundamental institutions, so far as these could be restored to their original meaning: seigneurial tenure and the French common law. The first seemed essentially favourable to an equal distribution of landed property, when the seigneury was conceived of as the guardian of social equality and as an insurmountable obstacle to capitalist speculation. It possessed . . . a further great advantage, that of maintaining the individuality of Lower Canada in the face of the surrounding Anglo-Saxon bloc. Thanks to French common law, the indispensable support of the seigneurial régime, Lower Canada would be able to develop in the true sense of its traditions. Finally, though an ardent anti-clerical, Papineau had reached the position where he could see in Catholicism a national institution which in some ways possessed the same advantages as the seigneurial system and the French common law. . . . It is understandable . . . that his opponents accused him of projecting medieval dreams.

Whatever the dreams, he certainly had opponents, by no means all of them English-speaking, or merchants, or men like the redoubtable Tory, Adam Thom, outspoken editor of the *Herald*. As we shall see, also, though Papineau was the symbol around which rebellion centred, he was a vacillator in action. His inability to accept the use of force, though he sometimes advocated it and though he helped plot the Rebellion of 1837, lost him control of what came to be known as the Patriote party when the issue was decided by arms.

The basic issue, of course, was control of government taxation and expenditure. The struggle by the popular assembly was common to

most British colonies during this period. In Lower Canada it was complicated by ethnic issues – which bore overtones of language, religion, law, and custom. While the growing English population of Montreal had reason to share the resentment of the political monopoly of the Château Clique in Quebec City, they could hardly ignore French resistance to further English immigration. The French had reason to fear projects which they felt were designed to undermine their majority position. Among these were agitation, led in Montreal by the merchants, for union of the Canadas in 1822, and a scheme to attach Montreal to Upper Canada. Though nothing came of either, they certainly triggered alarm among the more vocal Patriotes inside the Assembly and out.

The union proposal of 1822 was brought into the British Parliament by Wilmot Horton, and might have passed without comment had it not been for the doughty James Mackintosh, a Scottish M.P. who had connections with and sympathy for the Canadians. His questions in the House at Westminster caused the bill to be 'put over'. When word of what was going on in London reached Lower Canada and Montreal, active opposition quickly developed, centred around the person of Papineau. Nor was it entirely French in character. One of Papineau's closest associates before he achieved his extreme radical position was John Neilson of Quebec, publisher of the *Quebec Gazette* and a man of considerable consequence.

A petition of sixty thousand signatures was drawn up opposing union, many of them the 'marks' of illiterates. In Montreal, where the now substantial English minority was making its weight more and more felt, a counter-petition favouring union was procured by the efforts of the leaders of the merchant group, chief among them James Stuart. Papineau and his friends organized a corresponding society to fight union, and they managed to obtain 8,097 signatures from Upper Canadians for their petition. Stuart's party was much less significant numerically – its petition contained fewer than two thousand signatures – but many of its backers were men of considerable substance. Papineau and Neilson took the 'anti' and Stuart the 'pro' petitions to London, while in Canada a pamphlet controversy developed, with the opponents of union out-unioning the unionists by suggesting a federation of all the British North American colonies. The debate was long and increased in bitterness as, in England, the Papineau forces succeeded in discouraging any reintroduction of Wilmot Horton's bill.

The argument in Stuart's petition indicates the ethnic overtones of the struggle. It protested that of the fifty Assembly members only ten were English and that, as a result, the province was increasingly at the mercy of the 'backward peasantry'. 'All commercial enterprise and im-

provement have been opposed and obstructed and the country remains with all the foreign characteristics which it possessed at the time of the conquest, that is, in all particulars French,' Stuart's group protested in terms which have often been repeated. Wilmot Horton's union project had intended equal representation for Upper Canada and Lower Canada in the united Parliament, though in 1822 the population of the former was but one-fifth of that of the lower province. This was fine with Stuart, however.

In the words of the petition, 'The French population in Lower Canada, now divided from their fellow subjects by their national peculiarities and prejudices and with an evident disposition to become a separate people, would be gradually assimilated to the British population of both provinces.' Papineau, in reply, insisted that 'an insignificant minority wish for a change and are desirous of ruling against every principle of justice by destroying what they call Canadian influence. . . . Great Britain wants no other Anglifying in this country than that which is to be found in the loyalty and affection of the inhabitants, no other British race than that of natural-born subject, loyal and affectionate.'

As illustrated by the 8,000 signatures on Papineau's anti-union petition, Upper Canada was generally satisfied with the *status quo*. Pressure for union, coming largely from Montreal and the English- and American-settled Eastern Townships, made little impression in London. Still, while Wilmot Horton's bill was withdrawn, the issue continued as a source of friction between English and French in Montreal.

The friction was underlined again in 1828 with the departure of the Governor, Lord Dalhousie, who had long been the target of Reformist sniping from the Assembly, which was blamed by the English faction for his recall. John Richardson, one of the leading merchant-politicians in Montreal and a member of the Executive Council, tendered a dinner in Montreal in honour of the departing Governor. The English stressed the 'just' character of Dalhousie's government, thereby provoking Papineau's party and emphasizing the cleavage on ethnic lines again.

However, while that was no more, perhaps, than a passing incident, a few years later the struggle took on an ugly character. In 1831 a movement to annex Montreal to Upper Canada stirred a wide measure of support among the English mercantile group and their backers in both Lower and Upper provinces. It was forcefully rejected by the Assembly of Lower Canada in 1832, the year in which Montreal was incorporated as a city and its charter finally approved.

Once established, the municipal council became a new battlefield for contending political and cultural forces, one in which the contenders were more evenly matched than in the Assembly. A high pitch of excite-

ment was soon reached, when a vote was called in the West Ward, left vacant by the resignation of a member of the English party named Fisher. The Irish Reformer, Dr. Tracy, an associate in the radical periodical, *The Vindicator*, opposed Stanley Bagg, a prominent merchant, who represented the British party, for the council seat. When Dr. Tracy appeared to be leading by a few votes on May 21, threatening crowds around the polls resulted in calling out the 15th Regiment and a reading of the Riot Act. As the polls closed, Tracy's followers clashed with the troops under Colonel MacIntosh as they marched westward along St. James Street. A barrage of stones greeted the soldiers who were forced to halt. Their commander ordered the mob to retire, but, believing the troops would not fire, the demonstrators ignored repeated orders to disperse and continued their stoning. Finally, after the Colonel and a subaltern had been struck, the front rank of the leading platoon raised their rifles and fired. Three of the demonstrators were killed and two more were wounded.

The incident quickly inflamed the political contenders. The funeral of the dead rioters was turned into a political demonstration in which about five thousand angry people listened to a fiery oration by Papineau. After the inquest, he and the Reformers attempted to secure the arrest of Colonel MacIntosh and several magistrates. They claimed the troops had acted illegally; but their case was lost and there were no convictions. Nevertheless full propaganda value was made of the riot and the deaths. *La Minerve*, the voice of the Reformers, commented that 'it is difficult not to be convinced that there was a desire to make a general massacre. It is clearly proved that the faction hostile to the Canadiens has been preparing this atrocity for a long time. The party that we have opposed for thirty years desired today to shoot us down.' The *Gazette* and the *Herald* matched *La Minerve* in the vigour of their replies for the English party. On the Reform side, protests grew against granting Crown property to British capitalists and against the rising British immigration.

Amid this tumultuous atmosphere came cholera. In 1832 the Montreal Board of Health reported that there had been, between June 10 and June 25, 3,384 cases, of which 947 had been fatal. By the end of the month the worst was over and normal business routine was resumed, but not before the Canadiens had demonstrated their generosity to the stricken strangers, mostly Irish, who had arrived sick and destitute in their midst. They helped tend the ill, despite the threat to themselves, and they adopted many of the orphan children of those who died.

Yet the political and social consequences of the migration remained. As nearly fifty thousand immigrants entered the two Canadas in 1831 and 1832, the numerical threat imposed spurred the Reform party to

new attacks on the provincial executive. Their vitriol had the effect of alienating many of the English who had previously been sympathetic to Papineau's aspirations – Neilson broke with him in 1832. Still, the methods of the Reformers remained legal and constitutional, as clearly enunciated in the Ninety-two Resolutions put forward in the Assembly in 1834 and in the connections maintained with Radicals in England like J. A. Roebuck, a Canadian, who was now member at Westminster for Bath. Roebuck moved for a committee of inquiry into Canadian affairs in 1834 and advised the Lower Canadian Reformers to resist the British Parliament, adding fuel to flames already being fanned by *La Minerve* and *The Vindicator* as the unequal battle of petitions continued.

The Ninety-two Resolutions, backed by 18,083 signatures, were presented to the Parliament in London in August 1834 at the same time as a small counter-petition was given the Governor in Quebec. In the fiercely contested election of the next year, the Reformers Dr. Robert Nelson and Papineau were declared returned before the legal time of poll closing in Montreal. Meanwhile, the vigour of Papineau's denunciations of the Governor, Lord Aylmer, provided a pretext for the Reform papers appearing with heavy black borders of mourning during Aylmer's New Year's visit to Montreal.

Alarm among the English led to creation of constitutional associations in Montreal and Quebec. At a meeting in the former, an address to 'men of British and Irish descent in the British provinces' outlining the grievances of the English in Montreal was prepared and signed by John Molson, Jr. In the new year of 1835 the Assembly was prorogued by Aylmer after twenty-one days because of the tone in which the Reform majority pressed the Ninety-two Resolutions, which included demands that both Houses of Assembly be made elective. 'It was,' says Atherton, 'a conflict of two mentalities, become, for the time, hopelessly irreconcilable and highly inflamed by the vision of real and imaginary injustices. It was commercial progress and British expansion versus a conservative agriculturalism and a one-party "Nation Canadienne" for Lower Canada.'

Meanwhile, the state of Canada had become such that London resolved on an attempt at conciliation. Lord Gosford, sent out as Governor with powers of an extraordinary commissioner and instructions to offer concessions, appealed to all parties to reconcile their differences. He referred to 'a vast and beautiful country, a fertile soil, a healthy climate . . . no direct taxes, no public debt, no poor who require more than the natural impulses of charity'. But his good intentions were rejected by Papineau and his supporters in the Assembly in October 1835.

The English response came quickly. From Montreal a memorial was sent to the Governor requesting authority to raise a British volunteer corps eight hundred strong. Gosford, still the hopeful conciliator, turned it down on the grounds that it would only inflame the situation more. The English party went ahead anyway, and Gosford quickly made the corps illegal. The English faction protested that 'a body of loyal subjects has been treated as traitorous by a British Governor-General for no other crime than that of rousing themselves to protect their persons and property.'

Turned down legally, the English party began organizing on secret lines. They formed so-called Doric Clubs – a sort of para-military organization in plain clothes. Meanwhile, the English Constitutional Association held its annual meeting in December 1835, appointing ward committees for Montreal and drawing up a program calling for the 'abolition of feudal tenure, the continued improvement of the harbour of Montreal and of canal communications'.

The first Assembly of 1836 was prorogued after a brief session on March 21. It met again on September 22, to be prorogued on October 5 without passing a single item of legislation. There followed a hiatus until August 1837, when the session was even briefer. The passage-at-arms already seemed imminent when, in the tense atmosphere, Sir John Colborne was made commander-in-chief of forces in both provinces, having taken command in July 1836. The fighting around Montreal broke out in the next autumn.

13 1837–and All That

The apparently insoluble political deadlock which developed in Quebec with the rejection of Governor Gosford's belated attempts at compromise left a situation in Lower Canada which moved inexorably to rebellion. Neither the more radical wing of the Patriote reformers nor the more determined of the commercial Tory element, dominant in Assembly and Council, respectively, was prepared to give way. Papineau vacillated and increasingly lost control of his own more vehement supporters. On the other side, the British party believed it would have the backing of the big battalions from the Mother Country if it came to a test of arms. To a considerable extent, as we have seen, the division occurred in Montreal and Lower Canada along ethnic lines, but to regard the Rebellion of 1837 as wholly a French-English struggle – or for that matter to equate French with 'progress' and English with 'reaction' – would oversimplify the picture entirely.

Economically, the Reformers, whatever their philosophical pretensions, stood for maintenance of the traditional positions, though, despite rural overpopulation, extending an individualistic agrarian society was impeded by the seigneurial land tenure system. At the same time they were opposed to taxation for such essentially commercial purposes as the interprovincial canal system, without which the St. Lawrence economic empire was bound to lose in its struggle with the United States seaboard for the fruits of the Great Lakes heartland. Politically, of course, the Reformers' attachment to a narrow agrarian position took the form of attacks on the appointive side of government, which had continued to frustrate the Assembly just as the Assembly had continued

to foil the efforts of the Governor and his Council to govern. The mercantile group, for their part, believed the economic potential of the two Canadas could only be achieved through political union of the St. Lawrence commercial system. They also wanted the fetters of tradition removed, so as to better exploit unused Crown lands. Both of these proposals seemed inimical to the traditional agricultural economy and its feudally oriented civil code. And the British party's promotion of union naturally raised the spectre of eventual English domination.

With deadlock in Quebec, whatever 'dialogue' there might have been between moderates on both sides collapsed in exasperation. Solutions like Gosford's, which, had they been offered a few years earlier, might have been successful, were rejected by extremists in both camps. By the spring of 1837 reason was evaporating amid declamations of 'tyranny' by both sides – of 'treason' from one and of 'blind dictatorship' from the other. Montreal, though it had been the focal point of radical Patriote agitation for some time, was also the centre of the English garrison; thus, a recourse to arms by the Patriotes, were it to have any success, had to have bases away from the city. These were established in the valley of the Richelieu River to the south and east, and to the north-west in the Lake of Two Mountains region. With a sympathetic population and the possibility of help from the United States, the former made some military sense. The latter area was isolated and made none.

The fact that Papineau was losing control of the Patriote side was becoming apparent in the spring. In a mass meeting on May 7 at St. Ours, a village on the Richelieu eleven miles from Sorel, 1,200 people were harangued for hours by Dr. Wolfred Nelson and other radical leaders. Papineau was present and continued to be addressed as leader, but he was obviously becoming disenchanted by the course affairs were taking. The upshot of the meeting was the adoption of a series of resolutions which, among other things, denied the right of the imperial Parliament to interfere in the affairs of the province. The rudiments of an organization to boycott British goods was set up – a clear evocation of the early steps of the American revolutionaries of 1776, and made explicit by a declaration that the Canadians had erred in not associating themselves with that cause then. There was, however, no Declaration of Independence though there were suggestions that Imperial force would be met with force.

Governor Gosford responded on June 15 with a proclamation in which he declared that he would maintain the peace against unlawful assembly, and called upon loyal subjects to discountenance seditious writings and to shun disorderly political meetings. For their part the English 'Constitutional' party answered with a meeting in Montreal's

Place d'Armes on July 6 at which Peter McGill and George Moffatt acted as chairmen and at which two French loyalists, Joseph Quesnel and Sabrevoix de Bleury, were elected vice-presidents. Resolutions were passed condemning the attitude of the Assembly as injurious to the commerce of the country and affirming that 'the connection of the Mother Country is necessary to the prosperity and advancement of the province; and that any attempt to produce the dismemberment of the Empire is directly opposed to the desires of the meeting.'

Throughout the summer of 1837 the situation continued to deteriorate. At points all over the province Patriote meetings were held in increasing numbers and with speeches of growing virulence. In Montreal the Constitutionalists counterattacked with meetings, and a violent exchange continued in the pages of such radical papers as *La Minerve* and *The Vindicator* on the one hand, and of *Le Canadien* occasionally, and the *Herald* and the *Gazette* regularly, on the other. Queen Victoria's accession to the throne in August brought loyal addresses from Montreal and Quebec, but these did not lessen the tension. A Te Deum ordered to mark the accession was described in the Patriote press as turning the churches into political centres for the government.

In the Lake of Two Mountains area, the situation had taken a definitely nasty turn by August. Bodies of armed men entered St. Eustache and drove from the village persons known or believed to hold loyalist views. Scottish settlers fled to Montreal and some of their houses were broken into and robbed. The targets were generally those of British extraction, but a number of French persons also were set upon, especially those associated with the militia.

By degrees a military arm of the Patriote party emerged, calling itself Fils de la Liberté. The founding ceremony in Montreal was complete with a liberty pole, capped by a Phrygian bonnet and inscribed: 'To Papineau, his grateful compatriots, 1837.' Young men placed their hands upon this symbol, swearing to keep faith with the 'fatherland' and to conquer or die.

By September Gosford had given up all hope of conciliation. 'The government,' he wrote the Colonial Secretary in London, 'needs to be invested with the fullest powers, and according to my present opinion, you may be under the necessity of suspending the constitution.' Yet, if he was critical of Papineau, he was equally so of the 'violent and unjustifiable attacks which have been made by the ultra-Tories against the French Canadians in general'.

A letter from the commander-in-chief, Sir John Colborne, on October 6 shows a continuing deterioration in Montreal and elsewhere. 'At St. Ours,' he wrote, 'a pole has been erected in favour of a dismissed

[militia] captain with the description on it, "Elu par le peuple". At St. Hyacinthe the tricolour flag was displayed for several days. Two loyalist families have quitted the town in consequence of the annoyance they experienced from the Patriotes. Wolfred Nelson warned the Patriotes at a public meeting to be ready to arm. The tricolour flag is to be seen at two taverns between St. Denis and St. Charles. Many of the tavern-keepers have discontinued their signs and substituted for them eagles.' (The spirit of revolution was French as well as American.) Sir John Colborne concluded: 'The game which Mr. Papineau is playing cannot be mistaken, and we must be prepared to expect that if 400 or 500 persons be allowed to parade the streets at night, singing revolutionary songs, the excited parties will come in collision.'

Perhaps Sir John's fears had been triggered by a manifesto from the Fils de la Liberté proclaiming the intention 'to emancipate our country from all human authority save that of the bold democracy riding within its bosom'. Already these Sons of Liberty were meeting in Montreal and elsewhere for military training, though they did not yet have arms. In that sense, the loyalist Doric Club was probably more of a threat to the peace, at least in the city. Ironically, a public meeting was held by a group of persons of American descent living in the city. They pledged to 'range themselves with the British when the hour of trial came'. On October 23 the growing confidence of loyalist spirit in Montreal manifested itself at a meeting of seven thousand persons under the chairmanship of Peter McGill. Speakers took the tone that there was no cause to fear a successful rising 'by the mass of our fellow citizens of French-Canadian origin'. Spokesmen for the Montreal Irish abhorred 'the low and base attempts' to draw them over to the revolutionary cause.

More significant, however, was a meeting held on the same day at St. Charles, assembled in the name of the Confederation of the Six Counties of the Richelieu. There, five thousand rabid Patriotes shouted such slogans as 'Gosford, when will thou depart, robber of the public purse?' and 'Canadians know how to die but not to surrender.' Another long series of resolutions was passed, attacking Governor Gosford, stressing the sympathy of Americans and Upper Canada Reformers for the Patriote cause and inviting members of the regular regiments to desert. This meeting was marked by an open break between Papineau, still nominally the leader, and Patriote ultras like Nelson, Cyrille Côté, and Thomas Storrow Brown. Nelson, in fact, interrupted the Tribune of the People to fire the crowd with a declaration that it was time for more than words, time, in fact, 'to melt our spoons into bullets'. The meeting called on the people of the Richelieu Confederation to elect judges and militia officers to replace those dismissed for Patriote lean-

ings, and, in addition to urging desertion by British soldiers, Patriote military training was demanded as was resistance to decrees of the Governor. The assemblage reconvened the next day, when delegates demanded the formation of an assembly to replace that of Quebec – in fact, to establish a state within a state. It was clearly the prelude to armed rebellion.

On this same day, October 24, Bishop Lartigue of Montreal issued a *mandement* to be read from all diocesan pulpits condemning revolt against constituted authority as a violation of the teachings of the Church. *La Minerve* described the pastoral letter as 'more politics from the pulpit', and the Bishop's intervention drew wrath, derision, and demonstrations from every Patriote quarter. In some churches the *curés* were treated to 'La Marseillaise'. So intense was the feeling in Patriote districts that the Bishop considered resigning and taking refuge in the Quebec Seminary.

On November 6 in the chilly afternoon, about two hundred and fifty Fils de la Liberté assembled in a Montreal yard abutting on St. James Street. They spilled into the thoroughfare and attacked members of the Doric Club – the Tory society – and in the ensuing battle Thomas Storrow Brown, the former New Brunswicker turned Patriote, lost an eye. But in general the Sons of Liberty were too numerous and at first they routed their English opponents, chasing them along St. James Street and smashing windows in stores and houses along the route. The chase continued via St. Francis-Xavier to Notre Dame Street where the Doric members, reinforced, made a stand. The tide was reversed, and it was the turn of the Sons of Liberty to run – which they did as far as Dorchester Street, their numbers dwindling on the way. That afternoon the Riot Act was read by two French-Canadian magistrates backed by garrison troops. At 6 p.m. a second riot threatened when Loyalists had to be restrained by troops from attacking Papineau's house in St. Paul Street. They settled on wrecking the offices of *The Vindicator*, the Irish Reform paper. It was night before military patrols gained control of the streets.

By November 12 all drilling by private organizations was forbidden by the government and all public meetings banned. Four days later warrants were issued for the arrest of twenty-six Patriote leaders, including Papineau, Dr. O'Callaghan, and T. S. Brown, all of whom by this time had taken refuge outside the city. A troop of volunteer cavalry under Lieutenant Ermatinger, dispatched to St. Johns to arrest two other Patriote leaders, was ambushed at Longueuil on the way back by about three hundred Patriotes and forced to give over the prisoners. For the first time, shots were exchanged.

Ermatinger's troop was part of the recently activated militia, dormant since the end of the War of 1812. In Montreal a force of some six hundred of all ranks was created in a matter of days to back up the regulars. The nucleus was a single rifle company commanded by Major de Bleury and two troops of cavalry, Ermatinger's and one at Lachine. Weapons had to be borrowed from gunsmiths so that the men could drill.

The new call-outs were grouped into three so-called brigades. The first consisted of two troops of cavalry, an artillery company, and three infantry companies; the second of six infantry companies and a troop of cavalry; the third of less mobile groups known as associations. Uniforms were not available, so dark jackets and trousers, the latter with distinctive stripes to indicate companies, were worn. The single Scottish company had tartan trews. The only proper military issue was crossbelts of 1812 vintage, army greatcoats, and fur caps. Most men were eventually armed with obsolete Brown Bess muskets; officers carried the widest assortment of swords and cutlasses.

Drilling was conducted in halls and warehouses, and, if neither armament nor drilling was impressive, the former, at least, was superior to anything the Patriote irregulars could boast. The militia generally was able to maintain order in the streets of the city. But control in the country was something else again. The ambush of Ermatinger at Longueuil was evidence of that. In the scuffle, blood was shed before the Patriote prisoners were given up. The incident was blown up by the Patriotes into a full-scale victory and became the signal for open rebellion. The colonial government finally moved for punitive action. The brief but bitter fighting of the Rebellion of 1837 had begun.

As we have indicated, the vital centre of Patriote military organization was in the six counties of the Richelieu, with a lesser one in the Lake of Two Mountains district. General Sir John Colborne, the commander-in-chief, decided logically to penetrate the Richelieu area first, aiming at the villages of St. Charles and St. Denis, the main rebel strongholds – though that word should not be interpreted in any genuine military sense, for the Patriote leadership, weaponry, and training were all seriously defective. Once the government decided on a serious campaign of repression, the rebels were beaten; but the point had to be made with bullets and bayonets. The one forlorn hope of Patriote success, American intervention, never got past the stage of resolutions and Fourth-of-July-style oratory.

Colborne planned a two-pronged attack from Montreal, on St. Denis and St. Charles, hoping to capture the rebel leaders and nip the rising in the bud. One column under Lieutenant-Colonel Gore went by boat

to Sorel and was then to proceed up the Richelieu. The second column, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Wetherall, had already moved from Montreal to the fort at Chambly. From there it was to move on St. Denis, where the two forces were to meet.

Gore's force, comprising five companies of regulars, a troop of volunteer cavalry, and a howitzer, set out from Sorel on the night of November 22, planning to strike before daybreak. However, it was forced onto muddy back roads, and, after a night of slogging through sleet and rain, Gore's column arrived at St. Denis well after daybreak, the men hungry and exhausted. Nevertheless, Gore mounted an attack against the village, whose principal strongpoint was a stone warehouse three storeys high and stoutly built.

The Patriotes were commanded by Dr. Wolfred Nelson, Papineau having left for St. Hyacinthe, whence he fled later to the United States. As soon as it was discovered that the walls of the warehouse were proof against Gore's howitzer, the battle settled down to an exchange of musketry which continued for about five hours. Gore lost six killed and eighteen wounded, the Patriotes eleven dead and seven wounded. After the indecisive engagement, Gore ordered a withdrawal on St. Ours, part way back to Sorel. As an indication of the state of his force, only 117 men answered roll-call that evening. It was, technically, a Patriote victory, though misinformation, foul weather, and bad roads were perhaps the major factors working against Gore.

Meanwhile an incident occurred which was to fire the Loyalists to fury. A Lieutenant Weir, carrying dispatches from Montreal for Gore at Chambly, was captured by a Patriote patrol. Weir, dressed in civilian clothes, had his hands bound. Then he was placed on a wagon to be taken to St. Charles for safekeeping, first having given his word he would not try to escape. En route he saw Gore's troops closing on St. Denis and he leaped from the wagon. In a moment he was slain by the bullets and swords of his guards; his body was tossed into shallow water in the Richelieu. It was found a week later when the British returned to St. Denis and their slogan for the remainder of the rebellion became 'Remember Jack Weir!' It is generally conceded that much of the later mistreatment of Patriotes and their property could be laid to Weir's murder. Still another incident which indicated the growing savagery of feeling – and incidentally shows again that the rebellion was no simple ethnic struggle – was the execution by the rebels at St. Johns on November 28 of a French-Canadian loyal volunteer called Chartrand, who was tried at a drumhead court martial as a spy. Whatever disinterest the regulars may have felt at the outset was dispelled by these violations of what the army regarded as the rules of war.

To return to the main action: Wetherall had left Chambly on that same stormy night of November 22 with a battalion of regulars, a troop of volunteer cavalry, and two guns. Unlike Gore, he had a guide, the Swiss Major Gugy, who both knew the area and spoke fluent French. After struggling some miles, Gugy persuaded Wetherall that the force of three hundred would be in no condition to fight in the morning. Wetherall was still seven miles from St. Charles and that much again from St. Denis when he heard of Gore's setback. He ordered a halt and sent to Chambly for reinforcements.

At St. Charles, meanwhile, the Patriotes – commanded by T. S. Brown – occupied the fortified manor of a Loyalist seigneur, Debartzch, who had fled to Montreal. However, their numbers and weapons were fewer than those of their compatriots at St. Denis – about two hundred men with 109 muskets, rifles of every description, and two useless fieldpieces. They were short of powder and lead for bullets, and the varying bores of the weapons and limited sizes of cartridges rendered many useless. Nevertheless, when Wetherall resumed his advance a force under Bonaventure Viger delayed his march by destroying bridges and picking off members of the advance guard. As he drew near the village, Wetherall offered to allow the Patriotes to disperse without harm if they gave up their arms. Brown scorned the bid and Wetherall ordered his two guns to open fire.

The engagement lasted an hour. The long breastworks around the manor were quickly reduced and a bayonet charge finished the operation. Brown tried to rally his fleeing troops without success, finally riding off to St. Denis by himself. The Patriotes, outnumbered almost two to one at the outset, lost forty dead, another thirty wounded, and a similar number taken prisoner, to three dead and eighteen wounded for Wetherall's regulars and volunteers. It had been strictly no contest, and the decisiveness of the victory was apparent in the speed with which resistance to the government ended in the Richelieu valley. Papineau fled over the U.S. frontier. As Loyalist search parties combed the countryside, many of those who had taken up arms under his leadership complained bitterly of their leader's conduct and the failure of the Patriote movement to arm them with sufficient effective weapons. Wetherall's regulars returned in triumph to Montreal, escorting more than thirty prisoners and the liberty pole from St. Charles. On December 1 Gore revisited the scene of his own defeat at St. Denis. All was quiet, but his men (no doubt thinking of their discovery of Jack Weir's mutilated corpse) looted the village and put it to the torch, despite the fact that the people of the village had nursed and nurtured the wounded left behind on November 23. The actions of Gore's men at St. Denis,

and comparable incidents elsewhere, left in their wake a bitter if concealed anti-British feeling throughout the countryside.

One last bid was made south of Montreal by the Patriotes. On December 6 a group of armed men under E. E. Malhiot and Roger Bouchette, who had fled to Vermont, crossed the frontier with additional arms, hoping to rouse the populace and rekindle the rebellion. They were met just across the line at Moore's Corners by the Missisquoi Volunteers and put to flight in a matter of minutes. The invaders lost one killed and three wounded, including Bouchette, who was jailed at Montreal along with Wolfred Nelson and Bonaventure Viger. These two men had been captured during the police roundup following St. Charles.

Meanwhile, however, Patriote spirit was anything but broken in the Lake of Two Mountains district. News of the St. Denis victory reached St. Eustache on November 27 and was all that was needed to turn the entire area over to Patriote control. By December 14 the rebels had brought about a thousand men – Irish as well as French – under arms and even word of the St. Charles defeat failed to kill their hopes.

On December 14 Colborne set out by sleigh over the ice for St. Eustache, where about 250 rebels, commanded by Dr. Jean Chenier, had occupied a recently completed convent. The troops were driven back but a bombardment by rockets and guns then set fire to the convent and the church and broke the will to resist. Chenier died trying to rally his men, and another seventy Patriotes were killed by the two thousand regulars and militia as they jumped from the burning buildings. Another hundred were taken prisoner, against a loss to Colborne's force of (officially) one dead and nine wounded, though some eyewitnesses put the figure much higher. The victors pillaged the flaming village, most of which was burned down. Two days later they went to near-by St. Benoit, which they also sacked and burned to the ground, though there was no resistance. The regulars blamed the English volunteers, and it is probable that they were the leaders in the outrages, for many of them were district men who had been badly dealt with while the Patriotes held the upper hand. Nevertheless, by far the greater part of the force consisted of Colborne's 1,800 regulars and there appears to have been no serious effort to check the looting.

Some indication of the spirit of the affair as far as the volunteers were concerned is contained in an account left by a young militiaman. 'Our company,' he wrote, 'is composed of spirited young fellows, generally gentlemen, and we enjoyed the novelty of the thing and went in for the fun. We had little rest, however, for some of the more jolly fellows would sooner keep up the fun than go to sleep . . .'

On December 16, Colborne dismissed the volunteers, many of whom

burned and looted their way home. He and his regulars returned to Montreal, bringing with them 106 prisoners to add to those already in jail. It was the end of the Rebellion of 1837, though dissent was to flicker again briefly but bitterly in 1838 before the bloodshed was finished.

In Upper Canada, meanwhile, the hapless Reformers of William Lyon Mackenzie had been crushed without even the need of calling out the regulars. Mackenzie, like Papineau, had taken refuge in the United States. On the surface, the victory of the Tory party seemed complete; yet in the long run the Rebellion brought about the very reforms which it seemed to have blighted. The troubles focused the attention of the Whigs in London on colonial problems and resulted in the dispatch of the Radical peer, Lord Durham, whose *Report* became the cornerstone of responsible government for Canada.

The apparent crushing of armed resistance in Lower Canada led Bishop Lartigue to issue a new *mandement* condemning those Patriotes who had taken up arms in defiance of the Church and the constituted civil authority. A day of thanksgiving was ordered for February 20, 1838, during which Te Deums were sung. On the 27th Governor Gosford was recalled and Sir John Colborne – in effect the Governor for some time – was appointed administrator of the colony pending the naming in London of a successor to the unfortunate Gosford. Word also reached the colony that Parliament had suspended the constitution of Lower Canada until November 1, 1840, and had ordered the appointment by the Governor of a special interim council with legislative powers. Durham was named Governor General for all British North America, though he did not arrive at Quebec until May 29. Colborne, in the interval, named a council of eleven English and eleven French Canadians – Tories, bureaucrats, or placemen all.

Their first and only significant business was to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act for three months to enable the authorities to continue to hold without trial Patriote prisoners taken under martial law, which ceased to function in April when the state of emergency was declared over in the colony. Colborne, though maintaining very much a 'no nonsense' rule, had already set about categorizing the prisoners – about 500 in all – being held in Montreal as a result of the Rebellion. Two hundred were freed in January and another hundred before the beginning of May. Of those who remained, Colborne regarded seventy-two as important offenders whose fate should be decided by Durham.

However, with many of the more prominent leaders free in the United States, the smouldering embers of Patriote discontent continued to threaten a new fire. On February 28 a reminder of this occurred when

Robert Nelson, brother of the St. Denis leader now in custody, and Dr. Côté attempted to cross the frontier with 600 men. They were frustrated in the attempt by U.S. authorities and all gave themselves up to the American General Wool. Nevertheless, a proclamation of a Canadian republic signed by Robert Nelson – he styled himself 'provisional president and commander-in-chief' – was published in Montreal newspapers.

At the end of April, with the lifting of martial law, the troops which had been brought in from Upper Canada marched through the streets of Montreal prior to their return home. Then, at the end of May, John George Lambton, Lord Durham, and an entourage of colonial reformers reached Quebec.

The intricacies of Durham's brief tenure as Governor General are beyond the scope of this work. However, in Montreal his reputation as a reformer – in England he was dubbed 'Radical Jack' – was known and his advisers included men who had helped actively in drawing up Britain's domestic Reform Bill. Some indication of the hopes his appointment stirred on all sides in the strife-torn colony are found in an editorial in *Le Canadien*, a leading French-Canadian newspaper:

> We may be sure, that if the Home Government had been ill-disposed toward us, it would not have sent us the most liberal man to set our affairs in order . . . It is here the ill-will is, here the abuses, here the projects of oppression; in the Mother Country there is only ignorance and perhaps a little prejudice. Very well, let us enlighten this ignorance and dispel these prejudices.

From the outset Durham acted in a manner to appeal to the hopes expressed of him by anxious Canadians. He refused to renew the tenure of Colborne's council on the grounds that he would have no advisers who had been party to the troubles in the colony. In their place he named members of his own entourage, 'men of enlightenment' (i.e., sharing his views on colonial reform) and, with one exception, Britons with no Canadian ties.

In his first proclamation Durham invited 'the most free, unreserved communications' from any person.

> I beg you to consider me as a friend and arbitrator, – ready at all times to listen to your wishes, complaints and grievances and fully determined to act with the strictest impartiality. If you, on your side, will abjure all party and sectarian animosities, and unite with me in the blessed work of peace and harmony, I feel sure that I can lay the foundation of such a system of government as will protect the rights and interests of all classes, allay all dissensions, and permanently establish, under Divine Providence, the wealth, great-

> ness, and prosperity, of which such inexhaustible elements are to be found in these fertile countries.

Words of relief, no doubt, after Colborne's 'harsh tyranny'.

Durham's first concern, of course, was to try to heal the wounds of the Rebellion and to establish a stability on which reforms could be based. His trickiest problem was what to do with the political prisoners, and one of his first acts was to request their names and alleged offences. His solution, though eminently sensible, actually led to his undoing at home, where it was seized on by the opposition to Lord Melbourne's government which, threatened by defeat in Parliament, chided Durham for exceeding his brief and provoked a resignation from this proud and vain man.

The leaders of the French community had expressed hopes that Durham would grant a general amnesty. This, he realized, would only rouse the English, but he found the latter would be satisfied with banishment of the more serious offenders. Because he knew no French jury would convict, Durham's problem was how to secure the banishments he needed. Finally, having selected eight men as the most guilty, he worked a 'deal' whereby in return for confessions of guilt he offered banishment to Bermuda with a promise of an easy life there and pardon for all the other prisoners. One of his aides, Charles Buller, carried out the negotiations in Montreal with both prisoners and the English party. The prisoners pleaded guilty to high treason and accepted banishment, with the understanding they would be executed if they ever set foot in Lower Canada again. The English generally were satisfied. On June 28 Durham put the agreement in the form of an ordinance and, for the time being, all seemed well.

Meanwhile, Durham had already embarked on the other aspect of his brief – to study causes of colonial discontent and recommend remedies. He established commissions of inquiry into Crown lands and immigration for all British North America; into education; into municipal institutions; into land registry and feudal tenure; and into the whole legal and judicial system. He entertained lavishly in Quebec and Montreal and in Toronto and at Niagara. However, it became apparent as time passed that, though not personally hostile, he failed to grasp or felt to be archaic many of the aspirations of French Canada, a fact which became apparent later in his *Report*.

Nevertheless, all sides continued to be charmed and encouraged by this unusual English artistocrat. It was not until party squabbles in London undercut his authority and – in his eyes, at least – made his position untenable that hopes, especially those of the more moderate

Canadiens, were dashed. When he learned that Melbourne had given way to the opposition in the British Parliament, and that his ordinance banishing the prisoners to Bermuda had been disallowed, Durham resigned in a rage. He left Quebec on November 1, 1838, after but five months in the colony – but history was to find them the most productive months constitutionally, at least, of any spent by a British Governor in Canada.

His departure provoked widespread expressions of regret from all sides in Montreal and in Canada, coupled with fears that it meant an end to a policy of clemency and enlightenment. In a final proclamation Durham 'explained the reasons for his resignation, and virtually appealed from the decision of the British government to Canadian public opinion'. Charles Buller, who stayed on to complete the work of the commissions of inquiry, said the proclamation served to dispel fears roused by Durham's departure. However, it seems not to have done so sufficiently, for hardly had the Governor General sailed from Quebec than the final outburst of Patriote rebellion occurred.

After their abortive attempt at invasion and the proclamation of a republic for Canada in March, Robert Nelson and Dr. Côté continued to be the centre of a group of plotters across the American border. They had organized a secret society known as the Frères Chasseurs (Hunters' Lodges) and drawn up plans for an invasion of Canada which were far more ambitious than those of the unsuccessful Patriotes of 1837. The plan called for simultaneous attacks on Quebec, St. Johns, and Montreal after similar invasions of Upper Canada from New York and Michigan had drawn the garrisons from the lower province. The plotters had even secured the services as 'generals' of two veterans of the 1830 uprising in France, then living in exile in the United States.

But if the plans were venturesome, their execution was marred by the same incompetence, inexperience, and lack of arms that had doomed the 1837 rising. Not only that, but Colborne, again in command, had been informed well in advance and was more than ready when the rebels crossed the line. Among rebel aims were the exaction of £80,000 from Montreal merchant-banker John Molson as 'reparation for his wrongs against the province', seizure of the banks, the Lachine Canal, and the customs house at St. Johns, and the strangling of all Jews and confiscation of their property.

Only in the region southwest of Montreal did Nelson and Côté receive anything resembling support. Elsewhere the habitants were either apathetic or still cowed by the events of the previous December. And Colborne had no difficulty with the risings that did occur. On November 8 he dispatched a force of between 5,000 and 6,000 men – including

volunteers and Caughnawaga Indians – from La Prairie. There were skirmishes at Beauharnois, Napierville, and Odelltown, near the border. Nelson's men were already becoming mutinous when he fled back to the United States. By the 10th, all resistance was over. Beauharnois was fired by the Loyalists and elsewhere the houses of a number of known rebels were burned down. In the fighting, the rebels lost about fifty dead and as many more wounded.

Some of those involved in this last outburst of rebellion had already been pardoned for their acts in 1837. By mid December the number of prisoners held in Montreal topped 750. With Habeas Corpus again suspended, 108 of these were tried by courts-martial. Ninety-nine were condemned to death, though only twelve were finally executed. Of the rest, fifty-eight were sent to the Australian penal colonies, twenty-seven freed, and two banished. Colborne's justice seemed to please no one. 'As you will see by the [Montreal] *Herald*,' Lady Colborne wrote in a letter home, 'nothing can satisfy the ultra-British party, and with one party he [Sir John] must be content to be stigmatized as a tyrant, with the others as shamefully lenient.' Whatever the case, it was the end of armed insurrection.

Thus the leaders went free, some to rise to positions of eminence in Canada or the United States later, while the humble follower suffered the penalties of his belief in the cause of the men he had followed. Failing to persuade New Yorkers to intervene in the disturbed situation in Canada, Papineau left the United States for France in February 1839, hoping to interest the French in restoring Quebec to France, or at least to give arms and men to assist the descendants of their countrymen in North America. France simply was not interested. A distressed Papineau in due course returned home and actually served in the Parliament of Canada from 1847 to 1854. But by then younger men were no longer interested in following a leader whose besetting sin had been indecision, not to mention flight.

Yet, if the Rebellion was a dismal failure militarily, its long-term political results supported those who sought self-government for Canada. Montreal continued to be the focal point of politics, as the capital of the united provinces, until the riotous passage of the Rebellion Losses Bill in 1849, which was the inauguration of responsible government. But the days ahead, bright as they may have seemed to those who were advocating the union of Upper Canada and Lower Canada, had their ominous context too. The union was soon to appear as that of seriously divergent forces.

14 A Time of Varied Fevers

The three decades between the Rebellions of 1837 and Confederation constitute a watershed, not only for Montreal and the Canadas, but for the British Empire itself. In these years the worth of the imperial connection was seriously questioned on both sides of the Atlantic and the movement of the colonists for Responsible Government reached achievement amid the flames of the Parliament Buildings in Montreal and threats to sever imperial ties in favour of annexation to the United States (including a manifesto signed by numerous eminent Anglo-Montrealers). It was a period in which a brief revival of prosperity in the last days of the old mercantile system gave way to a radical re-orientation of trade. It was a time in which French Canada once more feared for the survival of its distinctive identity in the face of new patterns of migration and a rearrangement of political forces. These were the years in which the dream of commercial supremacy for Montreal and the St. Lawrence over New York and the Hudson finally died.

It was a period that culminated in the political deadlock of the sixties, whose resolution was to lead ultimately to the confederated Canada of today. Altogether, it was an uneasy and restless period, and of the decades between the Rebellions and Confederation, none was

more uneasy and restless for Montreal than that which has been aptly called the 'Roaring Forties'.

Montreal began the decade as a city of slightly more than 40,000 people and ended it with just under 60,000. On the surface it continued to surprise visitors from Europe, among them Charles Dickens, and to impress the visiting Yankee, despite the marvels of Boston and New York. 'In walking over the city,' wrote an Englishman, 'I could not but remark the beauty of some of the shops and the extent of the streets: Great St. James Street would reflect credit on London, and the marble edifices of some of the banks were really most imposing.' And another: 'Many rows of good houses, of cut stone, are springing up in the suburbs, and there is a look of solidity about everything, pleasing to the English eye.' An American was 'struck with the beauty and strength of its wharves and quays, the substantial character of its buildings of thick stone walls, its magnificent churches, and no less with the beautiful smooth wooden pavements, than with the narrowness of the streets.'

Some of these streets, by the end of the decade, were lighted by gas. There was an improved waterworks system, a combined police and fire department, a new city charter, an elected council in which English, French, and Irish citizens played their roles. A city plan had been drawn up with the help of no less a geographer than David Thompson, and a general awareness of the need for beautification had resulted in several new parks and squares. There were new churches of many faiths, a Protestant high school, an art association, a Mechanics' Institute, and a faculty of Roman Catholic theology in the new Grand Séminaire, which was a forerunner of the University of Montreal (itself for many years an adjunct of Laval University in Quebec City).

Yet, as Gilbert Tucker was to write during another angry decade – the 1930s – the city

> was not a social unit, and from this came many troubles. Apart from its cosmopolitan character as a trade centre and seaport, Montreal was the home of two distinct cultural groups. The population was predominantly French and therefore Roman Catholic, while the commerce and wealth of the city were largely in the hands of an active, progressive, and in some ways dominant English and Protestant minority. . . . Here then were some of the most potent of the causes of strife among men – national, religious, and linguistic differences – and they generated heat due to proximity, and to hatred and fear. As a result the imposing little city was morally and spiritually disunited, and weaker than its buildings of solid stone.

Much of the heat apparent during the Roaring Forties came from the still unresolved conflicts of the previous decades. Though the British

party in Montreal may have regarded the crushing of Papineau's rebellion as settling the issue of racial pre-eminence, there were others in the Canadas – and by no means just the French – who bore no love for vested Toryism, whether its exponents were merchants and bankers in Montreal, or placemen of the Family Compact in Upper Canada. However, in the immediate post-rebellion period Reformer and Patriote alike still suffered the stigma of treason-by-association, or something near it. And, while Durham's *Report* favoured the creation of ministries able to command a majority in a popular assembly, this aspect of his report, though it irritated the Tory entrepreneurs, was largely counterbalanced by the economic potentialities of provincial union and the generally anti-Canadien tone of that historic document. As for the French, though Durham's assimilationist recommendations appeared disastrous, they were in no position to act politically; it was a matter of waiting and hoping that, in whatever new legislation the Melbourne government in London decided to enact, some room to manoeuvre might be found.

The man dispatched to Canada by the imperial authorities to prepare the ground for an act of union, and, after, to apply it, was Charles Poulett Thomson, soon to be created Baron Sydenham. The appointment could not have been more appropriate for the commerce-minded men of Montreal. Sydenham was a shrewd businessman descended from businessmen, and with these instincts were combined parliamentary skills learned in ten years as member for Manchester in the Commons and five as president of the Board of Trade in Whig governments. A friend of the new Colonial Secretary, Lord John Russell, he was as much a Reformer in Britain as his minister and a Free-trader to boot. But for the Canadas, stagnating in the aftermath of depression and civil strife, he was more concerned to revive the commercial apparatus than to tinker with notions of constitutional responsibility. Faction or party was thus anathema.

Getting agreement in Lower Canada to a proposed union plan was not difficult, for the constitution remained suspended and Sir John Colborne's hand-picked council offered no objection. In Upper Canada, Family Compact Tories feared a union in which the French would receive the weight their population justified. But Sydenham won over the Assembly in Toronto by assurances that the massive debt of Upper Canada would become a joint charge on the new Parliament, and by a guarantee of equal representation in the Assembly, which, added to the English representation of the lower province, appeared to the Upper Canadians to downgrade the French.

If this were not enough, Sydenham carried an ace in his sleeve, the

Bonsecours Church, from a painting by Georges Delfosse

(*Above*) Montreal in 1802, from a painting by Georges Delfosse

(*Top right*) Montreal from St. Helen's Island about 1830

(*Lower right*) Montreal Harbour, about 1830

(*Opposite*) A street scene around 1840, showing the Nelson Monument

(*Lower left*) The first Victoria Bridge, built in the 1850s to carry the Grand Trunk Railway across the St. Lawrence River, was one of the engineering marvels of its time.

(*Below*) A Notman photograph, taken in 1863, of Montreal harbour from Notre Dame Church looking east

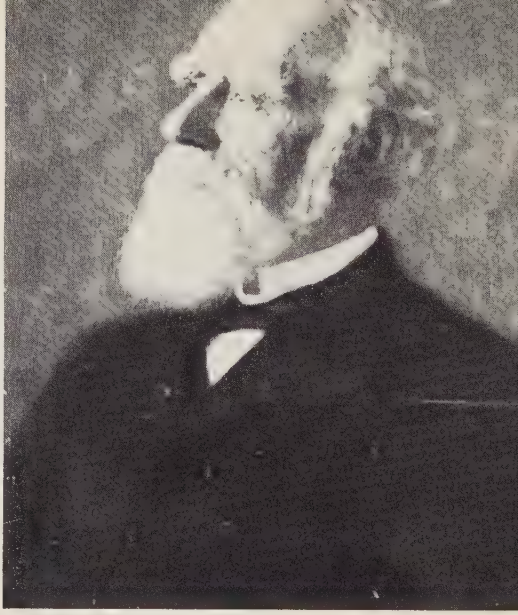
Bonsecours Market in the late nineteenth century, another Notman photograph

The men behind the Canadian Pacific Railway:

(*Right*) George Stephen

(*Facing page—upper left*) William Van Horne

(*Facing page—upper right*) Donald Smith



Molson's Brewery about 1880

A Notman photograph of St. Catherine Street at Phillips Square on a wintry day about 1902

promise of an imperial loan of a million and a half pounds sterling, which would go a long way to restore confidence in the province and to ensure a new start on the canal system which men believed would guarantee the pre-eminence of the St. Lawrence route. For surely, said the commercial visionaries of the day, a through route for substantial ships from the head of Lake Erie to Montreal and thence to the sea beyond would win with ease over the shallow, clogged, Erie barge canal with its higher freight rates and sometimes interminable transshipment delays at Buffalo and Albany. Surely this improved St. Lawrence waterway would not only draw the produce of Upper Canada at an increased rate through Montreal, but would also be a magnet for the vast American granary south of the Great Lakes.

For the men of commerce in Montreal the act uniting the Canadas, passed at Westminster in July 1840, was the culmination of a long campaign to end the arbitrary division of the St. Lawrence system, though the concession to western Toryism that placed the capital in Kingston seemed unnatural to the 'metropolis'. Yet Kingston, a sober, granite town, was true-blue and free of the taint of rebellion. It also had close commercial ties with Montreal merchant and banking houses. Nor did the new legislative structure draw English fire, though the act brought a petition of protest from 10,000 French-speaking Quebecers and from the clergy of Montreal. The Legislative Council was to comprise notables appointed for life. The united Assembly was to have forty-two members from each of the provinces, now to be known as Canada East and Canada West; a property qualification of five hundred pounds seemed to assure that men of some substance would occupy its seats.

Furthermore, a civil list would safeguard the salaries of the Governor, the bench, and the civil service from the whims of the elected representatives, should they prove errant. And, finally, with a veto for the Governor, disallowance in Westminster, and English the sole language of record for proceedings, it was not surprising that the union could be seen as mercantile Montreal's solution to the aftermath of rebellion. To the Tory mind the proposals would serve the material needs of Canada (and probably their own pocketbooks) while meeting the principles of the second British Empire. From the outset the union plan had every chance of winning popular support. 'Languor, for the moment,' wrote one editor, 'seems to be felt in almost the whole circle of Provincial controversy. Men in general are sick and tired of the whole thing.' After years of violence and unrest many people in Lower Canada were relieved to turn their backs on public disturbance and to consider instead the practical needs of the province. Lord Sydenham expressed

this general sentiment in his repeatedly quoted aphorism: 'Avoid useless discussions upon theoretical points of government.'

Political passions may have burned out among those primarily concerned with setting the wheels of business to turning again and putting the financial affairs of the province in order, yet the ten thousand signatures from Lower Canada against the act and the protests of bishops and clergy were a warning. And, although Sydenham, through heavy-handed techniques of gerrymandering and intimidation, succeeded in getting nineteen unionists elected in the new Canada East, the seeds of political faction were apparent beneath the surface of his carefully managed first (and only) Parliament in 1841.

Actually, Sydenham took steps that tended to cancel each other out. He appealed for non-partisan help in a broad program of reconstruction, yet the boons he sought had the effect of leading party men to seek favours, or give them, in the process. The very strength that he and Lord John Russell gave to the provincial executive could only lead to one result, the struggle for control. In making the Governor's council the hard core of administration, it was bound to be the focal point of political ambition. In the days prior to the Mackenzie and Papineau rebellions the executive authority had operated under strict limitations and under department heads who did not need to be members of the legislature. In neither Upper nor Lower Canada were highly placed officials – law-officers, receivers-general, and others – necessarily members of the Executive Council. Nor was there any single body of 'experts' in either province who acted as policy advisers and then guided the resulting enactments through either Legislative Council or Assembly. These and other confused procedures of the past Sydenham sought to correct by taking a decisive step towards what today would be called the 'supremacy of Parliament', although a better phrase might be 'responsibility of the executive to Parliament'. Thus through the Union Act of 1840, the foundations of a more efficient civil service were laid. The Assembly was also inhibited from voting any tax or appropriation that had not been brought in by the government of the day. To assist in carrying the load of getting his new form of government 'going', Sydenham created a Board of Works and an administration consisting of heads of departments, and these were the men who actually sponsored and defended government policy. Viewed in retrospect, the Canadas were suffering the first labour pains in the birth of responsible government as we know the term today.

Thus, though Sydenham's hand-picked executive excluded anyone tainted with Reform tendencies, he had, unwittingly, created the grounds for their coalescence. Although he died shortly after proroga-

tion of Parliament, an alliance between the Reform element in Upper Canada under Robert Baldwin and a reviving French party under Lafontaine was already in the making, with the subtle Francis Hincks as go-between.

Lafontaine, a Montreal lawyer and one-time follower of Papineau, though wiser and more prudent, had described the union as 'an act of injustice and despotism'. But he also fought against French-Canadian tendencies to abstain from public life as playing into the hands of the assimilators. He early perceived that the most successful tactic to ensure *la survivance* was an alliance with the Reformers of the upper province.

'Our cause is common,' he said. 'It is to the interest of the Reformers of the two provinces to meet on the legislative ground in a spirit of peace, union, friendship, and fraternity. . . . I have no doubt that, like us, the Reformers of Upper Canada feel the need of it, and that in the first legislative session they will give us non-equivocal proofs of it, which I hope will be the gage of a reciprocal and lasting confidence.'

The proofs did not come so quickly or quite so unequivocally as Lafontaine perhaps had hoped. But under Sydenham's successor, Sir Charles Bagot, a diplomat and a man of liberal sensibilities soon attached in sympathy to the French, the atmosphere improved. Before his equally brief tenure as Governor ended, sufficient progress had been made so that what is usually considered as the first 'responsible' executive in Canada's history – the Baldwin-Lafontaine ministry of 1842-3 – could be formed.

Thus, within four brief years of Lord Durham's derogation of any 'vain endeavour to preserve a French-Canadian nationality in the midst of Anglo-American colonies and states', and within months of Sydenham's death, the pattern of the future – government by a fraternity of the 'founding races' – was discernible. In the debate in the Assembly that preceded Bagot's acceptance of the joint ministry, Lafontaine had attacked the role assigned to the English language in the Union Act, which could be understood as a key to the anglicizing intention.

> I am asked [he said, speaking in French] to pronounce in another language than my mother tongue the first speech I have to make in this House. I distrust my ability to speak English. But I must inform the honorable members that even if my knowledge of English were as intimate as my knowledge of French, I should nevertheless make my first speech in the language of my French-Canadian compatriots, if only to protest against the cruel injustice of the Union Act in trying to proscribe the mother tongue of half the population of Canada. I owe it to my compatriots; I owe it to myself.

Later in the debate he returned to the theme of co-operation of the races, but also made it clear what the position of his own would be should co-operation not be graciously conceded.

> The two populations of Upper and Lower Canada have common interests, and they will end by sympathizing with one another. Yes, without our active co-operation, without our participation in power, the government cannot function in a manner which will re-establish the peace and confidence which are necessary to the success of any administration. Placed by the Union Act in an exceptional position as a minority in the distribution of political power, if we are to succumb, we shall succumb while making ourselves respected . . . I have as a Canadian only one duty to fulfil, that of maintaining the honorable character which has distinguished our fellow countrymen and to which our most bitter enemies are obliged to render homage. This character, Mr. Speaker, I shall never dishonor!

A battle had been won, but not yet the war. The sympathetic Bagot became severely ill. He recovered briefly, but died in May 1843. In Montreal, *La Minerve* editorialized: 'Only a memory remains now of the great man who was the regenerator of the French Canadians; but this memory, deeply marked in our grateful hearts, will be an eternal monument in the bosom of the people which posterity will contemplate when many others have crumbled and disappeared.' Bagot's successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, was an imperialist with a more traditional view of what that implied for the role of Governor General of the province of Canada.

In 1844 a new fillip was provided to the city by the movement of the capital from Kingston to Montreal. It was high time indeed, Montrealers felt, for their community was the largest (its population had now surpassed that of Quebec), the most prosperous, and the most cosmopolitan (or so they believed), in addition to being the financial and commercial centre of the colony. The fact that it was, more often than not, a centre of the most agitated politics might also be regarded as a qualification, though to Sir Charles Metcalfe faction and party were as much anathema as they had been to Sydenham. Metcalfe had governed India and Jamaica and had governed them well, but his views of the viceregal role were more in tune with the old Empire than with the principles of Responsible Government that he found imbued the Baldwin-Lafontaine ministry he inherited. Not, however, that Metcalfe was an extreme 'anglicizer'. He believed that the French should have a voice in affairs, but as individuals, not as 'slaves of party'. He thus ran headlong into battle with Lafontaine and Baldwin, and before he had been long in Canada found himself without a ministry at all.

However, the fusion of political tensions and economic disorientation was some time in coming to explosion. In the first years of recovery following the rebellions, there was a new spirit of economic buoyancy and expectation in the air, and nowhere was this more apparent than in Montreal, the commercial capital for a century and a half. Between 1838 and 1840 alone, the tonnage of ships clearing Quebec (which was a gauge of goods transshipped from Montreal) rose from 354,739 to 478,906. There was a steady rise in the traffic through the Welland Canal at the far end of the waterway and at Lachine, just outside Montreal. Overseas exports out of Montreal and Quebec by 1841 exceeded £2,000,000 in value, and produce entering the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence system from the American side was a spur to the hopes of those who believed this system to be the commercial key to the continent. Thus came renewed confidence in the St. Lawrence and, with imperial assistance and the astute reorganization of provincial finances by Hincks, made inspector general in 1842 by Bagot, work was resumed enthusiastically on the canal system which had languished incomplete since the rebellions and the collapse of Upper Canada's finances. No one, went the talk among Montreal businessmen, stood to gain more from all this than the island city which, as ever, was the keystone of the system. A man seemed no idle visionary now when he talked of the day when Montreal would surpass New York as commercial entrepôt of the coming age in North America. These were heady years, the early forties, and the talk and life in Montreal reflected their spirit.

Thanks to the recommendations of Durham and the efforts of Sydenham, rudimentary municipal governments had begun to function in the Canadas. In 1840 Montreal received its second charter as a city, and by the time it became the capital its council was made up of twenty-two aldermen representing three city and six suburban wards. The change to the elective system occurred in 1843, after a period of 'tutelage' in which the early councils (at first of eighteen members) had been appointed by the Governor, in a way that reflected the ethnic make-up of the population. On the first council, seven of the members were French, the other eleven seats being shared among Scottish, English, and the growing Irish population. Peter McGill was the first mayor. There were, of course, charges that the English-speaking element had been given a dominant position it did not deserve, but as the decade had progressed heavy migration, especially of the Irish, had resulted, by 1851, in a situation in which the non-French outnumbered the French by approximately 31,000 to 26,000. Furthermore, the English-speaking element was far from being a solid bloc, the Irish labourers in particular displaying no great love for the English and Scots who controlled most

of the city's wealth. For that matter, the disputes between Orange and Green, endemic across the sea, were being re-enacted wherever the two groups were close together in Canada, with many of the Irish displaying growing sympathy towards the movement for joining the United States.

The operation of municipal government under the motto Concordia Salus – with the coat of arms adopted in 1833 re-established – had made progress by 1844. By the end of 1842, a 136-page book setting out the city's by-laws had been published, regulating such varied aspects of municipal life as public markets, public bathing, lighting of streets and the vehicles that used them (hackney coaches, carriages, cabs, and omnibuses), and the curbing of wintertime exuberances, like snowballing or sledding or skating on the streets, which is a recurring theme in Montreal's annals of play.

A permanent fire and police department was established, with 102 men including four mounted patrols. The department, dating from 1842, replaced the inefficient watch and the volunteer fire brigade. It was headed by an inspector, whose annual salary was $300, assisted by a superintendent, a chief engineer, overseers of chimney-sweeping, and captains and lieutenants in charge of each company of twenty to twenty-five men. Many of the latter were still volunteers, but they were now paid five shillings when there was a fire – which was often. The police role was still rudimentary; in the event of serious disturbances the authorities continued to rely on the military garrison. The department continued its dual function until 1857, when a separate police force was formed.

The beginnings of city planning date from Peter McGill's mayoralty (1840–2), when Ostell, the city surveyor, hired David Thompson to carry out a general survey and street layout. It was from this decade that the improvement of such streets as Craig, Lagauchetière, St. Denis, Sherbrooke, Dorchester, and Mount Royal date, an indication of the growth away from the old city by the river. Landmarks begun or completed during the decade include Viger Gardens (Place Viger), Bonsecours Market, the upper part of what is now Victoria Square, Phillips Square and Beaver Hall Hill, Jacques Cartier Square, Papineau Square, and Lafontaine (known until 1889 as Logan's) Park.

1845 was the notable year for local improvement, much of it due no doubt to the city's new eminence as capital of the province. Atherton describes the social life of the city as 'colourful and brilliant', noting especially the visit of Dickens in the 1840s as 'causing quite a flutter in the provincial town'. This life, Atherton says, 'found its highest points of reflection in Rasco's Hotel, where Dickens stayed, on St. Paul's Street . . . a resort of fine folk of the town almost from its opening. . . . Private

theatricals were the rage, with the ample Theatre Royal in which to present them. Dickens trained the military set in amateur theatricals and acted with them and says of himself, "I really believe I was really funny" as Mr. Snobbington in *Past Two O'Clock in the Morning.*'

The Recorder's (Magistrate's) Court dates from 1841 and the Montreal Bar Association from the previous year. The decade also saw the beginnings of a regular system of public education, paid for from the rates, though it was 1856 before separate boards of Catholic and Protestant school commissioners were established. The Montreal Board of Trade was incorporated on March 2, 1842, and in the following two years a choral society, the Mechanics' Institute, and a museum of geological survey were founded. In 1844, the Mercantile Library Association bought the old Montreal Library, and the Institut Canadien, destined to play a significant role in the cultural and political affairs of the city and the whole of French Canada, was founded. In the same year the cornerstone was placed for Belmont School (forerunner of Montreal High School), and 'Monklands', a large house on the heights of what is now Notre Dame de Grâce, today forming a portion of one of the city's many convents, was obtained as the official private residence of the Governor General. The first Parliament to meet in Montreal was convened at the refurbished St. Ann's Market Hall on July 1, 1844.

In 1845, the year the 'New' (Bonsecours) Market was opened on St. Paul Street, just east of Jacques Cartier Square, the city took over the waterworks from the private company which had been supplying homes and businesses. City Council found new quarters, moving from a room in the home of one Mme de Beaujeu to another under the Hayes Aqueduct, which remained 'city hall' until 1852, when Bonsecours Market assumed that role.

Church-going was still the Sunday occupation of most citizens and, while Notre Dame (the 'largest church in North America') continued to serve all the Roman Catholics of the city, a variety of new congregations of other denominations date from the forties. In the development scheme involving the old Frobisher estate of Beaver Hall, which included Phillips and Beaver Hall squares, were built the city's first Unitarian Church in 1845, Zion Church in 1846, and, just after the end of the decade, St. Andrew's.

Coincident with the beginning of the decade was the consecration of the redoubtable Ignace Bourget, the eleventh son of a habitant who had farmed at St. Joseph de Lévis. As Bishop of Montreal, Bourget dominated the life and thought of his see for half a century. He was 'a vigorous and creative churchman, with a great interest in education;

but in the near future he was to prove to be one of the chief links between French Canada and the illiberal, ultramontane Roman Catholicism of Pope Pius IX. The next two decades were to resound with the intellectual battles between this leader of the diocese of Montreal and the Institut Canadien.'

The Institut was founded in 1844 as a literary and debating club – significantly, in terms of its 'debates', two years after the return of the Jesuits to Montreal at Bishop Bourget's invitation and one year before the return of Louis Papineau from his exile in the United States and France. Papineau was the spiritual father of the Institut, which reflected the radical, republican, nationalist, and anti-clerical views that were to explode all over Europe in the revolutions of 1848. Bourget was its most dedicated enemy in Montreal, and it was his opposition more than any other single factor which brought about the eventual demise of the Institut and, concurrently, the conversion of the political Rouges from anti-clerical nationalism to the respectable, large 'L' Liberalism of Laurier. Nevertheless, from its founding through Confederation, the Institut remained the ideological focal point of the vociferous, if influentially limited, radicalism of French Canada – and of Montreal.

The founding meeting of the Institut took place in a dimly lit basement of a premises on Little St. James Street. Among those present were Joseph Doutre, Antoine Dessaulles, later editor of *L'Avenir*, the ideological organ of the Institut and the Rouges, Rodolphe Laflamme, a McGill law student and ardent admirer of Papineau, the printer Louis Perrault, in whose cellar could be bought under the counter the proscribed works of Voltaire, Hugo, Balzac, Rabelais, Bayle, and Spinoza; and Perrault's master craftsman, Joseph Guibord. Victor Hugo was to become the honorary patron of the Institut, whose branches spread to towns and villages all over the province and whose library grew from 500 volumes in 1846 to more than 5,000 in 1854.

Early political activities included the collection of funds for a monument to the Patriotes of 1837. The fashionable radicalism of the period was expressed by *L'Avenir* in campaigns for the separation of Church and State, universal education, and, more to the political point, the creation of an elective upper house and governorship, a reflection of the influence of American republicanism, which had been present since the early days of Papineau and before.

The influence of the Institut was too strong among the younger intellectuals of the time to be overlooked by a man like Bishop Bourget. By 1848 the clash of the radicals and the Church was out in the open, with priests instructing their parishioners to close their eyes to *L'Avenir* and the Bishop threatening to excommunicate its editors. In 1852,

[illegible] was unprepared for this event and the people [illegible] by [illegible] and [illegible], but the banks were prepared for it. [illegible] by almost [illegible] during the last [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]'s opposition to the proposed [illegible] was largely [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] and was a major factor in [illegible] [illegible] by [illegible], [illegible], and the [illegible] of the English [illegible] whose [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] with [illegible] by the [illegible].

Work to improve the Lachine Canal so that [illegible] had to a system which was to enable [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] was begun in 1843. By that time [illegible] [illegible] the Lachine Canal Act, which gave a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

('emporium' was the fashionable word in the press of the day) of the continental northeast resulted in much bitterness among the leading merchants and bankers. As we shall see, the disaster was more apparent than real; but, coinciding as it did with general bad times and with the 'treachery' of Lord Elgin in signing the Rebellion Losses Bill in the spring of 1849, it was enough to trigger the annexation movement. For a time the city saw the irony of an 'alliance' between its English Tories and the anti-clerical Rouges, who revived Papineau's 'philosophical' arguments in favour of membership in the republic to the south. All of this was transitory, of course. The return of good times in the early fifties went a long way to resolving the problems. The canal system was and remains a major factor in the growth of Montreal. Furthermore, the reorientation of commerce resulting from the 'commercial revolution' implicit in Britain's final opting for free trade proved no real disaster for either Montreal or Canada. Good times, railways, and reciprocity healed the wounds, though the metropolitan dream of commercial empire died hard.

To what extent the St. Lawrence visions of men of commerce on both sides of the Atlantic might have been realized, had imperial protection been maintained, remains a matter of speculation. Certainly there were factors operating against Montreal and in favour of New York – and, of course, of Boston and Philadelphia – which had nothing to do with imperial trade policies. Chief of these was that ever-present problem of climate. The American Atlantic harbours were free of ice the year round; Montreal was icebound a third or more of the season – in effect, for half the year, in the days before powerful steamships came into general use and dredging and ice-breaking operations were carried out on a wide scale. Furthermore, even during the warm months, Montreal was something of a cul-de-sac. It and Quebec were the only two ports of call – which really meant one, because of their basic interrelationship – whereas the Atlantic seaboard of the United States presented both more ports and fewer hazards, because all were within a few miles at most of open water. New York, especially, offered facilities and efficiency which more than offset the lower rates on the St. Lawrence system.

In sum, the massive resources of the United States would undoubtedly have proved decisive. Even so, despite the crushing blows delivered Montreal's fondest hopes in the late forties, the canals – in many respects the engineering wonder of their age – did prove, as Professor Glazebrook says in his *History of Transportation in Canada*,

> wise and necessary; and they stood as a tribute both to the Canadian provinces and the confidence of the British government which to no

> small extent financed them. The St. Lawrence canals provided what was necessary: a trunk line to the west; and if it proved impossible to draw through them the volume of trade which many hoped would come, the general philosophy underlying the belief was not yet abandoned. It was held throughout the early part of the railway age, which overlapped the great canal age and to some extent eclipsed it. The hopes which had once been fixed on water transport were then diverted to the new plan of rail transport.

Thus far in this chapter the effort has been to etch in the lines of what was happening in a growing community. In all but what has been told of the fever of rebellion, the pre-Confederation development of Montreal bears a resemblance to the growth of any great city at a similar stage. Yet the duality of Montreal, since 1760, has always made its story a tale of two cities in one. In the latter sense that is the essence of its uniqueness among major North American cities.

But before the political anguish in the wake of rebellion exploded in the rioting and clamour which makes one of the most dismal chapters in the history of English-speaking Montreal, there had been anguish of a different and deeper sort, rooted in the ultimate misery of plague and death. The plague was typhus, the dead mostly Irish immigrants, wretched victims of the potato famine at home and, badly undernourished before they sailed in packed, insanitary ships, easy prey for any disease.

The Irish migration was the final wave of one of those recurring population explosions that had characterized Canada since the days of Colbert and Talon. Between 1820 and 1850 hundreds of thousands of people, some from the United States but most of them surplus population of the British Isles, arrived to fill the agricultural areas of the Eastern Townships, the Maritimes, and Upper Canada. Montreal was a focal point for the migrants. Most of them were in transit, but enough stayed to give the city a brief non-French majority at the century's mid-point.

The decade of the Roaring Forties was a high point for this movement, a time when 'immigrant' and 'Irish' became almost synonymous, when the great influx from the Emerald Isle changed the whole face of the city and resulted in the growth of Griffintown and St. Ann's parish near the Lachine Canal, itself largely the work of Irish labour. In 1841, 28,086 migrants reached Montreal. In 1846, the year the first Irish famine victims began to arrive, there were 32,153. The next year, as a result of a law passed in the United States restricting immigration, most of the Irish were diverted to Canada. The first ship to dock at Quebec in the spring of 1847 brought disaster.

Eighty-four of the 241 passengers jammed together in the fetid air below decks were suffering from ship fever (typhus); nine others had died at sea. In Montreal all during that frightful summer the picture took on the aspects of a lazarette as thousands of Irish arrived by steamer from Quebec. Death literally stalked the docks and the streets, as those who had seemed healthy when examined at the already overcrowded quarantine centre at Grosse Isle, below Quebec City, succumbed aboard river steamers or shortly after coming ashore in Montreal. At the end of the first week of June warning came from Quebec that the typhus outbreak was reaching epidemic proportions, but because of the numbers arriving quarantine regulations were impossible to enforce; the physical facilities simply did not exist.

By June 1, 1841, as political men squabbled over the Union Act, shiploads of Irish immigrants, at times more than two thousand a day, were pouring into Montreal from the so-called, but utterly ineffective, entry examination point at Grosse Isle. Even while coming upriver many were already dying. On June 5 the city established a local board of health to endeavour to cope with the growing crisis. It immediately shut down the lodging houses which rented beds to near-destitute incomers, recognizing these as the hotbeds of infection they were. It changed the landing area for the immigrant ships from the main harbour to Windmill Point, slightly outside the built-up city proper.

The fever-rate continued to grow. Grosse Isle itself became a ground of pestilence, but the 'authorities' there continued to pass the stricken through and to clear shiploads to Montreal. Sick and dying men, women, and children were literally dumped ashore, many too ill and weak to walk. They lay on the stones of the wharf, many to die without even setting foot in their new country. Others filled a long shed ashore, including a group of more than 800 who had been brought upriver from Grosse Isle in the steamship *Queen*. When secretary Brown of the Board of Health visited the scene shortly after mid-June, he learned to his anguished amazement that they had not even been given medical attention. Brown loaded as many as possible into carts to be taken to hospital. Deaths even occurred among those who lay prostrate in what might almost be called the 'tumbrils'. Soon every available bed was filled and all other patients removed, from the fear of certain infection.

If June had been a month of pestilence, no word can be found to describe the horrors of July. Sheds adjacent to the outlet of the Lachine Canal were turned into emergency hospitals. Others were filled with destitute families, many in what were known as the Old Immigrant Sheds, close to the Wellington Street bridge over the canal. The Board of Health (which had been given complete powers of decision and

action, but no money) secured authority to impose a fine of £500 on any ship landing immigrants on the regular harbour wharves – this after the *John Munn* put 400 persons in sick and dying condition ashore in the harbour proper. The influx continued.

By the end of the month some 2,000 still uninfected arrivals were housed in the sheds. In those that were used as emergency hospitals the sick and dying were tended by the Grey Nuns, a large number of whom were themselves infected and killed, as were eight Catholic priests who ministered to the dying. Deaths among the new arrivals, according to such records of the epidemic as have been unearthed, continued to rise steeply to the peak of the crisis, which can be established as the month of July.

Some strange quirk in the make-up of many human beings made them morbidly curious to visit the stricken area. With what must have been bitter sarcasm, the Montreal *Gazette* remarked that 'between four and five in the afternoon is the favourite hour of promenade'. It is an incomprehensible enigma which time does not change. More understandable than the 'promenades' of the morbid to the fever-sheds were the protest meetings held in Bonsecours Market and at other points when the city's medical authorities decided to move all but actual plague victims into open sheds at Point St. Charles, approximately a mile above the intake pipe for the city's drinking water. From the mayor came the retort that the sewage and other drainings of the whole city already were being emptied into the St. Lawrence through a creek above the water pipes; to add that of a couple of thousand immigrants would not 'much increase the evil'. In simple truth, no other site could be found posthaste for these unexpectedly displaced unfortunates.

Abatement of the plague began in August. It terminated with the coming of colder weather, although before then it had spread as far west as Kingston and, in lesser degree, to Toronto, where people verged on panic when they discovered that many newcomers to the city had only recently emerged from what were termed 'the fever-sheds of Montreal'. The sheds the migrants had left were not as bad as all that, however. They had not been intended to house actual fever victims, so far as one can discern from patchwork records, but as a temporary stopping-place for people in transit who had not fallen prey to the epidemic, but who had been held in Montreal by edicts that sought to confine it to the city. Other records indicate, however, that some of those moved to 'the Point' did fall ill and die there. Yet when Lord Elgin personally visited the sheds he was reported to be 'exceedingly pleased' with the work accomplished by the Montreal health authority. But the shed area consisted, he reported, 'of a large square with a court

in the centre where coffins were piled, some empty waiting for the dead, some full awaiting burial'. Clearly not all those housed at Point St. Charles were uninfected. Infection may not have been discerned prior to removal from the actual fever-sheds and may have developed later. The fact that the conditions discussed occurred more than a century before this is written, that records are sparse and at times confusing, has to be taken into account. But that Montreal was a stricken city and that the plague was not of its own making is no doubt true.

But if the period of the plague in Montreal had its low moments, as in the 'promenades' of the morbid and the protest meetings, political squabbling, and infighting of some of the disaffected members of the community whose memories refused to reject the outcome of the Rebellion, it was also a time of great compassion. Men and women from every walk of life gave whatever service they were called upon to perform. People whose official duties could easily have been used as an excuse to stand aside gave of themselves without thought of reward, or personal survival, to succour the sick and dying who had literally been flung into their city without so much as a by-your-leave. In this sense Montreal had every right to be proud of many of its citizens.

Visits of mercy to the sheds cost Montreal valuable citizens, among them the Right Reverend Hudon, Vicar-General to Bishop Bourget, and Mayor John Mills, one of the city's most popular characters. Bilingual and 'at home' with both French- and English-speaking citizens, Mills had been mayor of Montreal since 1845. He regularly visited the typhus sheds, but, on the occasion which turned out to be his last, it was said that 'his wife had a premonition of disaster, and as he left her she burst into tears'. Mills, who had lived in the Frobishers' old Beaver Hall mansion where Belmont Street is now, died on November 12, one of an estimated 6,000 persons in Montreal, most of them migrants, to succumb to typhus in that dreadful year. What looks, in retrospect at any rate, to be the only bright moment for Montreal's Irish in 1847 was the opening of St. Patrick's Church.

Many of those who survived the fever settled in the low-lying Point St. Charles area, some finding work in the city's chief soap-manufacturing plant operated by Robert Griffin, after whom a section of the 'Point' was named Griffintown. For many years the land near the river was subjected to periodic spring floods, so that the ill-luck of 1847 seemed to remain. From the fifties on, the Point people more and more became associated with the Grand Trunk Railroad, and many of them were to have sons on sporting teams associated with both the Shamrock Club and the railway.

Meanwhile, the disasters of epidemic gave way to those of economics

as the full effects of Corn Law repeal began to be felt. Ship fever was replaced by that of politics as the second Reform administration of Baldwin and Lafontaine came to power in 1848, and, at the instance of Lafontaine, determined to put through its Rebellion Losses Bill to test the willingness of Elgin to accept the advice of whatever ministry controlled the Assembly.

1848 was a year of economic distress. Despite this, the Bank of Montreal remained sufficiently liquid to move into its new headquarters with its classically porticoed façade on the north side of Place d'Armes, and a run on the City Savings Bank was caused by a flood threat to its offices rather than the threat of bankruptcy. Times grew more difficult, so that in 1849 Elgin reported that 'property in most of the Canadian towns, and more especially in the Capital, has fallen 50 per cent in value within the last three years. Three-fourths of the commercial men are bankrupt.' These circumstances were made doubly unbearable to the disenchanted Montreal mercantilists by the belief that the end of imperial preference had been the beginning of American advantage. The Montreal *Pilot* wondered, 'How do these Americans thus become usurpers of our trade?' and 'How can land on one side of latitude 45 remain unsaleable at a nominal price of 5s to 10s per acre, and right opposite on the other side of this mere imaginary line, within gunshot, be in quick demand at as many pounds per acre?' Such was the petulance of English Montreal even before the crisis was brought to its crescendo with Elgin's signing of the Losses Bill.

The £100,000 which that act earmarked for compensation to claimants for losses during the 1837 Rebellion was bad enough during a time of depression; it was compounded by what English Montreal regarded as the question of loyalty. Those who qualified for indemnification under the act included anyone not actually convicted of treason; and if some of these had been loyalists in 1837, others, so the Tories believed, had been either rebels or 'fellow travellers'. Besides, the Tories were out of office in 1849 and hypersensitive to any slight, real or imagined. It was too patently a matter of 'the righteously proud conquerors of 1837 being compelled only twelve years later to pay the losses of those who had risen in arms against their Sovereign: The idea was abominable: it was too much for loyal flesh and blood to stand: But, as the Tories reasoned, the heinous measure would of course never become law, for even if approved by the House it would never be sanctioned by the Governor, being so clearly the most despicable sort of opportunism, against all tradition, and seasoned with treachery and hypocrisy.'

The Tories, of course, were wrong on all counts. The bill carried the House easily (47 votes to 18) and Elgin, whatever he felt about its

merits, was determined to act on the principle of responsibility to the elected majority which he and Colonial Secretary Earl Grey had agreed was now proper for the colony and to which he had already acceded the year before when he called on Lafontaine and Baldwin to form a government after the defeat of the Tories at the polls and in the House.

That change, he wrote to Grey in his report on what followed his assent, was 'clearly and distinctly traceable to a revulsion of sentiment in the British constituencies of Upper Canada. In Lower Canada nothing has occurred to account for either [the complexion of the Assembly or the change in government]. This circumstance has, however, failed to secure for the decisions of the popular representative body either forbearance or respect from a certain section of those who profess emphatically to be supporters of British interests. To denounce Parliament as French in its composition and the Government as subject to French influence, has been their constant object, and the wildest doctrines have been broached with respect to the right which belongs to a British minority of redressing by violence any indignity to which it may be subjected from such a source.'

The Governor cited, as indicative of the tone of such doctrines, the views of a Montreal Tory editorialist that 'when French tyranny becomes insupportable we shall find our Cromwell. Sheffield, in the olden times used to be famous for its keen and well-tempered whittles; well they make bayonets there now, just as sharp and just as well-tempered. When we can stand tyranny no longer, it will be seen whether good bayonets in Saxon hands will not be more than a match for mace and a majority.'

'We remember,' the *Gazette* had written in February, 'these Frenchmen coming in armed bodies in 1837, and burning up the houses and barns of quiet inoffensive people when sleeping in their beds, and shooting and stabbing them as men, women, and children attempted to escape through the snow drifts. And we remember that many of them died from exposure, and almost all were mutilated by the daggers of the inhuman vandals, butchers – or whatever name of infamy may be strong enough to designate them.'

To which, at about the same time, the *Herald* had added: 'We shall not believe that the assent of the Crown will ever be given to an Act which must deprive it of the respect and confidence of those who have ever shown themselves ready to defend it, alike from foreign enemies and domestic traitors.'

Such had been the mood well before Elgin confounded the English Tories – press and persons alike – when he drove from Monklands, his Montreal residence, to the Parliament Buildings at the foot of McGill

Street to sign the Rebellion Losses Bill into law in the afternoon of April 25. On his reappearance he found a 'by no means numerous' crowd gathered, which demonstrated against him and pelted his retreating carriage with eggs and stones, though, by his own account to Lord Grey, there were also some cheers.

> Within an hour after this occurrence [Elgin wrote the minister] a notice . . . issued from one of the newspaper offices, calling a meeting in the open air. At the meeting inflammatory speeches were made. On a sudden, whether under the effect of momentary excitement, or in pursuance of a plan arranged beforehand, the mob proceeded to the House of Parliament where the members were still sitting, and breaking the windows set fire to the building and burned it to the ground. By this wanton act, public property of considerable value, including two excellent libraries, has been utterly destroyed. Having achieved their object the crowd dispersed, apparently satisfied with what they had done. The members were permitted to retire unmolested, and no resistance was offered to the military who appeared on the ground after a brief interval, to restore order, and aid in extinguishing the flames. During the two following days a good deal of excitement prevailed in the streets, and some further acts of incendiarism were perpetrated. Since then the military force has been increased, and the leaders of the disaffected party have shown a disposition to restrain their followers, and to direct their energies towards the more constitutional object of petitioning the Queen for my recall, and the disallowance of the obnoxious Bill. I trust, therefore, that the peace of the city will not be again disturbed.

It was five days later, on April 30, that the Assembly passed a resolution expressing regret to Elgin on the burning of the Parliament Buildings and apologizing for the Montreal mob. Elgin drove once again from Monklands, with a small escort of dragoons, to receive the expression of regret. What followed as he reached the city was reported in the *Herald* for May 1:

> At last after many false alarms, the front rank of the escort of Light Dragoons were seen advancing up Notre Dame Street from the Place d'Armes: presently the carriage appeared, and its appearance was the signal for a prolonged yell and groan from the assembled multitude. As His Excellency passed the Guard House, some persons standing at the gateway continued during the whole time he was passing to throw eggs into his carriage. [Later] learning that Lord Elgin had departed through a side door, the crowds were immediately alert, and with that instinctive decision with which street crowds discover their object, learned in a moment that instead of

> returning through Notre Dame Street to the Place d'Armes, the carriage had proceeded in the other direction, and was travelling at the most rapid pace towards Sherbrooke Street. Some of the persons who had been standing about Gosford Street [into which Elgin had emerged from the temporary Assembly room in Bonsecours Market] were of course aware of what was going on, and these followed the carriage as quickly as possible. Others took cabs, calèches, everything that would run. It was a chase. At length His Lordship was overtaken at Mr. Molson's corner, between Sherbrooke Street and the Main Street of the St. Lawrence suburb. At this point a furious attack was made with stones on the carriage; the back of it was completely smashed in; and its course was changed to the road which goes around the back of the mountain. In this manner did His Lordship depart yesterday from the capital of Her Britannic Majesty's possessions in North America.

To which the *Quebec Gazette* added, on May 3, some additional colour:

> For a long distance through the most populous streets of Montreal, His Excellency, the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, the Representative of her Majesty the Queen in Canada, was absolutely chased by the mob; dragoons spurring, covered with foam and mire, postilions whipping for their lives on one side, and on the other, within a stone's throw, Scotchmen running at the top of their speed, and stopping here and there to hurl a brickbat, and an imprecation; carters driving 'ventre à terre', the bottom of their calèches filled with stones, men on horseback urging on the crowd with frantic gestures: every cross-street which intercepted the path, pouring out new rioters: the whole one confused shout of anger, triumph, and exultation. At length, the unfortunate victim Elgin finds a shelter: he creeps into Monklands by a back door: and for the present he has escaped his ruthless enemies.

In the course of the rioting the homes and lodgings of the ministry were key targets of the mob, which used the excuse of the funeral of one of its members slain during the Parliament riot to demonstrate again. A number of persons were arrested, including Ferres, editor of the *Gazette*. *L'Avenir*, voice of the Rouges and Papineau, complained that these men were only cautioned and released. Elgin, in exasperation, described the mob leaders as 'bankrupts – desperate men who are looking to annexation as a last resort. [Sir Allan] McNab [the leading Tory], Gayley and others of the political clique are also ruined men. . . . Petitions are being signed praying for my recall. I wish to God they had nothing more mischievous in mind.' And again, 'Montreal is rotten to the core, and if all Canada be like it, the sooner we have done with

it, the better.' But, he continued, 'All French Canada is with us, but our great object is to keep them quiet and prevent a collision between the races.'

The petitions to London did seek more than Elgin's recall. They wanted primarily to have the Losses Act disallowed. One, originating in faraway Fredericton, was reported in the vehemently Tory *Courier* of Montreal, and its plain appeal sums up much better than all the *Courier*'s invective the baffled feelings of loyalists far enough away from the scene not to have been caught up in the spirit of mob:

> We humbly conceive [said the New Brunswick petitioners] that, under the circumstances, Your Majesty would never allow a Bill of this atrocious nature to be acted upon, and would, if all other measures failed, exercise your Royal prerogative to disallow it; as it is subversive of order, unprecedented in principle, and strikes at the very roots of loyalty and British rule on this continent; for if the orderly are to make good the losses of rebels and traitors, occasioned by their attack on Your Majesty's Crown and Government, who would then be orderly and loyal?

It was a question which perhaps deserved a better answer than it received from anyone in the mother country. There Parliament upheld Elgin's action and reaffirmed confidence in him as Governor: not, of course, on the ground that he was abetting traitors, but because he had followed his instructions and, by accepting the advice of the majority Reform ministry, had implemented the Responsible Government recommendations of his late father-in-law, Lord Durham.

It was the high point of a decade in which is rooted the whole constitutional history of Canada and of the 'old' Commonwealth. Something later to be known as 'Dominion status' was conceived in the Roaring Forties; in the triumph of Baldwin's Reformers English and French moderates were victorious. Assimilation of the French by the English-speaking majority was a dead issue in Canada West and among the supporters of Lafontaine in Canada East. Yet the immediate reaction was one of the strangest incidents in the annals of this country, when Tories stung by the 'desertion' of the Crown bade in their petulance for annexation to the United States and French-Canadian Rouges provided ideological support. Bitter enemies were momentarily joined: the Tories because their long-sought union had been sullied by Responsible Government and an apparently wrecked economy, the Rouges because Responsible Government did not go far enough for their radical tastes and because their policy would wreck the union. The aberrations were momentary and, in retrospect, obviously doomed to fail. They were none the less bitter for that.

Intimations of annexationist sympathies have already been noted. With the arrival of word that there would be no disallowance of the Rebellion Losses Act the lid blew off, as the *Gazette* put it, the 'over-boiling and sanguinous cauldron'. 'If the Sovereign of England is led to believe that it is more in the interest of the Empire to preserve the affections of the French, than of her British subjects in Canada,' ranted the *Courier*, 'let her take all steps to do so in God's Name: but let no man blame those British subjects in such circumstances for taking steps whenever and wherever they may find it convenient to declare their independence of a Power which can so insult them.' The *Herald* spoke out for annexation, adding, 'It is our firm belief that in sanctioning the rebel-paying–loyalty-insulting act, England has murdered allegiance in Canada. . . . If the connexion is severed, it will be the consequence of her own ingratitude and baseness . . .'

The Annexation Manifesto of the Montreal merchants and Tories did not appear until October 11, when it was printed in the Montreal *Gazette* over the signatures of such prominent citizens as John Torrance, Jacob De Witt, M.P.P., J. Redpath, John Molson, David Torrance, William Workman, D. L. Macpherson, L. H. Holton, Benjamin Holmes, John Rose, Q.C., Edward Golf Penny, William Molson, Benjamin Workman, D. Lorne Macdougall, J. W. Torrance, Peter Redpath, James Torrance. There were 308 other signatories. Formation of an Annexation Association soon followed, and the campaign was carried out through the winter and into the spring of 1850. It was an astounding volte face for Toryism, and it was confined largely to Montreal. Much of the annexationist sentiment was expressed through the pages of the lively English-language papers, though, ironically, with support for a time from the Rouges. This, however, again came from the same spirit of republican idealism that the rebellion had reflected, and had nothing much more than an 'I-told-you-so' connection with the Tories' sense of having been deserted.

For the Annexationists proper, the argument was economic at bottom, whatever the psychological reaction to the Rebellion Losses Act. As put by G. N. Tucker in *The Canadian Commercial Revolution*, it boiled down to the idea that 'annexation to the most prosperous country in the world – a country which indeed seemed almost immune to economic disorders – would confer upon the province a like prosperity. It was indeed nothing else than the everlasting and familiar comparison with the United States; but the moral to be drawn was a new one. Again it was said that "English Free Trade is a death-blow to the Colonial connexion".' This argument was capable of development.

> The truth is [ran the Annexationist Manifesto] that between the

> abandonment by England of her former system of protection to Colonial produce, and the refusal of the United States to trade with us on a footing of reciprocity, Canada, to use the old proverb, is between the devil and the deep sea, and we must own – it may be perhaps from our terrible blindness – that we can see no way to get out of the scrape, but by going to prosperity, since prosperity will not come to us.

Now the Annexationists, the outspoken exponents of imperialism while its protective measures were in force, turned to the oft-expressed views of the Manchester School in Britain which, to one degree or another, assumed that the colonies were largely (as Disraeli had it later) 'a millstone about our necks', bound to go anyway and the sooner the cheaper. These views made the assumption that Britain would no doubt concur in Canada's becoming one of the United States easy to make and implied again that the fault if any was Britain's, and not that of the true-blue Tory colonists. 'Apart too from prosperity and convenience,' as Tucker says, 'it would be more honourable to be "citoyens américains" than "colons anglais", and we hear of the "enervating" influence of imperial rule.'

Nor, it was suddenly discovered, were the Americans all that different. 'What matter is it,' asked one newspaper, 'whether you number yourselves among the millions of Anglo-Saxons that obey our gentle Queen Victoria, or among those other millions who have delegated the supreme administration of their affairs for four years to plain old Zachary Taylor?' The ethnic argument also implied the end to 'French domination' in Canada East, though this was more apparent in the speeches of Montreal's English annexationists than in the written words of their publicists.

In addition to the merchant Tories and some of the French radicals, there was backing for annexation among Americans in Montreal and Irish of both Green and Orange persuasions.

For the Rouges, caught by the European spirit of 1848 as they had earlier been attracted by that of 1830, there was 'an almost religious veneration for the American system of government, "qui certainement est le plus parfait de l'univers" ', as *L'Avenir* put it. They still felt that Canada was governed tyrannically and saw annexation as a means of dissolving the detested union of the Canadas. By comparison, the economic argument was of little consequence; French intellectuals cared nothing for commercial affairs.

Annexation found some support in the upper province, also suffering economic migraine, but nothing like that which it roused during its brief heyday in Montreal and the Eastern Townships. With a few

exceptions, fence-sitting was as favourable a response as the Montreal association received; the great bulk of the press in Upper Canada was opposed. In the United States, which, after all, would have the last word, reaction was mixed. The vision of a republic stretching from the Isthmus of Panama to the Arctic as well as from Atlantic to Pacific had always fired some patriotic souls, and these believers in Manifest Destiny were convinced that their nation would eventually reach these dimensions anyway. Yet, in hard terms of power and politics, a new wedge of non-slave states across the north would not sit well south of the Mason-Dixon Line, and that problem bulked larger in many American minds than did the theoretical advantages of taking over a land no one really needed.

Finally, neither Canadian Reformers nor English Whigs were yet prepared to cut the umbilical cord, no matter how much either may have believed separation would one day occur. There remained too many advantages for all but the most die-hard Canadian malcontents. In Britain, Palmerston decided the issue when he told the Commons: 'To that proposal, of course, the Crown could give nothing but a decided negative; and I trust . . . it is not their intention to push their project of joining a neighbouring State to the ultimate result of endeavouring by force of arms to effect a separation from Great Britain; but that they will acquiesce in the decision of the Crown.'

The Annexationist movement began to fail from the spring of 1850. Already an Annexationist candidate had been defeated in a Quebec by-election. Business began to pick up; reciprocity was under discussion in Washington. Above all, the Losses Act had become a *fait accompli* with the passage of time. The capital was moved from Montreal to Toronto in 1850, partly because of the Annexationist movement, but mostly because of the mob. Tory Montreal began looking for alliances so as to act within the structure of Responsible Government won by Baldwin, Lafontaine, and the Reformers. As time passed, tradition won out all round and Lafontaine's successors found themselves in the camp of the 'New Tories' of Canada West, whose leader was to be John A. Macdonald.

The mantle of reform passed to George Brown and the Grits in the upper province, in an uneasy alliance with the Rouges of A. A. Dorion. Brown's chief lieutenant in Montreal was to be Luther Holton – one of the key signers of the Annexation Manifesto, to complete the irony of realignment. For the Tories, the new men in Montreal were of the type of Alexander Tilloch Galt and George Etienne Cartier – both, fittingly, to be leaders in the economics of the railway age.

15 Railways and Confederation

Sir Allan Napier MacNab, the laird of Dundurn Castle near Hamilton and Family Compact Tory *par excellence*, is credited with saying first, and most bluntly, that politics is railways and railways politics. Almost from their beginning, in fact, railways have been mixed with politics in Canada in one way or another, from the building boom of the 1850s, a decade which started with thirty-six miles of track and ended with 2,065, to the battles which continue today in the House of Commons and its committees. And, to a great extent, the commercial development of Montreal since the 1850s has been as closely linked with rail transport as with ships and, more recently, airplanes. At the outset, certainly, almost any Canadian railway was a Montreal railway because the island city in the St. Lawrence remained Canada's link with the sea and the markets beyond.

In the decade following the failure of the Annexationist movement, the development of the railway boom was central to the reorientation of the Canadian economic outlook, which became continental as much as imperial. Railways inevitably became politics because the expense of their construction involved the colonial, and sometimes the imperial, governments, and because the men prominent in railway promotion, like MacNab and Galt, were also prominent in politics.

By the end of the fifties, in the words of O. D. Skelton, biographer of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt, railway entrepreneur *par excellence* and politically one of the early confederationists,

> Canada was vastly different from what it had been at the outset. Not only were the ends of the great struggling province bound together, and winter's six months' ban upon intercourse with the outer world removed, but new experience had been attained in organizing joint stock companies. The flow of capital from London had started. New possibilities of sudden wealth by railway promotion or land speculation (and the two were usually linked) opened up before the sober plodding provincials. . . . The nation-building possibilities of the railway were becoming manifest to the eye of faith. The province [of Canada] definitely emerged from the pioneer stage and became an organic part of the great world of commerce and finance.

And, though Montreal's brief and hectic tenure as political capital of the province gave way, first to the compromise of alternating between Quebec and Toronto, and later to another compromise resulting from Queen Victoria's picking Bytown, a mere village that became Ottawa, Montreal remained the commercial capital and the transportation hub of British North America.

In conception, of course, neither railways nor political federation nor union of the British colonies that straggled over the two thousand miles from St. John's and Halifax to the tiny Red River settlement was new as the decade of the fifties opened – though they were still considered novelties by many British North Americans. Colonial union was one of Lord Durham's pet schemes. Railway promotion talk was widespread in the Maritimes as early as 1829. In Lower Canada the first railroad in the North American colonies, a scant sixteen miles linking La Prairie across from Montreal to St. Johns on the Richelieu, was in operation by 1836. Another few miles of track connected Montreal with Lachine. But these were mere seasonal roads to by-pass turbulent water and to supplement the great canal projects that had been regarded in the thirties and forties as the guarantees of a brilliant economic future for the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence.

Even the first rail project of consequence – the St. Lawrence and Atlantic, which marked Galt's entry into railway financing and building – was conceived as an adjunct to the St. Lawrence river and canal system. Its initial purpose was to provide a winter link between Montreal and the ice-free harbour of Portland, Maine, some 280 miles to the southeast. It was the outgrowth of Eastern Townships interests, for,

until the American Drawback Act in 1845, Montreal men of business still looked to the canals for their profits. However, the results of the American act and the repeal of the Corn Laws roused Montreal interest in Galt's railway project. Among the prominent Montreal merchants and financiers who joined with him were Peter McGill, William Molson, George Moffat, John Torrance, and John Fotheringham of the City Bank.

The St. Lawrence and Atlantic received a provincial charter in 1845. It was to be a joint undertaking with interests in Maine, the Canadian section to be built to the New Hampshire border, the American section northwest from Portland, and the whole to be known as the St. Lawrence and Atlantic. Longueuil was to be the northern terminus. The need for a bridge over the river to Montreal was evident to all, but a project of such magnitude and expense was beyond the scope of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic. Victoria Bridge came later with the Grand Trunk.

The financial and construction complexities with which Galt and his associates were forced to deal are beyond the scope of this history. Of Galt's associates, Luther Holton, D. L. Macpherson, and Casimir Gzowski, the Polish-born engineer, are most famous in history. Galt himself played a pioneering role in raising private capital in London, and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic is unique among early roads, in that Galt and his associates were able to keep control in Canadian hands. Their trials and tribulations in raising the necessary capital would have discouraged lesser men, but by 1853 the line was completed, the American builders through New Hampshire and Maine having kept their side of the bargain, and Montreal was tied to a year-round deep-water and ice-free port on the Atlantic seaboard – Portland.

In the mad race for further charters that characterized this decade, when the optimistic forecast for Canadian railways was set forth in some fantastic prospectuses, Galt and his friends remained unique in their belief that their Montreal-based entrepreneurial schemes – though they were prepared to go to almost any source for capital – were solid enough that Canadian railways could be kept in Canadian directorial hands. Galt's attempt to make the Grand Trunk – designed to span the vast distance from Rivière du Loup to Port Sarnia – a Canadian-controlled operation failed. Too many other promotors (and in some cases even that word is a euphemism) and their political bedfellows were anxious for the real or imagined benefits of the line. Nevertheless, Galt and his associates, in surrendering their charter for the Montreal-to-Kingston section to an English-based company, did at least ensure the

building of the Victoria Bridge, one of the engineering wonders of the age. This made Montreal proper the terminus of lines running west to Toronto, Niagara, Windsor, and Sarnia, and on into Michigan, and east, via Richmond, to Lévis, opposite Quebec, and Rivière du Loup.

Galt, Macpherson, Holton, and Gzowski also joined to form one of the most substantial railway construction companies in Canada after bowing out of the board of the Grand Trunk operation. Then politics came to be more and more a preoccupation, especially with Galt and Holton. Galt became one of John A. Macdonald's trusted lieutenants in Canada East (the other, of course, was George Etienne Cartier), and Holton was George Brown's chief English-language supporter in the lower province during the great political battles of the fifties and early sixties which led to the federation of all the North American colonies.

Thus, from railways to politics to Confederation. For Montreal itself the most important aspect of the railway boom was the promise that the city would remain a significant shipping centre, if not the pre-eminent port and commercial and financial centre that its leading men had visualized during the forties. This not only for the produce of Canada West but also for that of the American mid-west, whose exports could be tapped by the railroads and canals. Furthermore, because the railways kept Montreal in year-round contact with both its natural hinterland and the Atlantic at Portland, it remained the trading centre for goods coming into Canada from abroad. With the end of the lean years of the late forties and early fifties, the city on the St. Lawrence began to prosper anew – and to grow, as immigration continued to bring men and women hopeful of a new life within its environs.

Life in the city took on new social refinements with the construction of the large mansions of the men of wealth. But life was still turbulent below the surface, and from time to time this turbulence, reflecting the varied social, religious, political, and ethnic composition of the city, made itself felt. The story of Montreal in the period before Confederation combines the growth of commerce and wealth and periodic tragedies arising from disease, fires, floods, explosions, and sometimes rioting in the streets. But there was a relaxing of the earlier ideological and political causes of friction, and the people were more taken by such wonders as the Victoria Bridge, and the improvement of the harbour and the river channels which brought regular steamship service to Britain, than they were by such incidents as the Gavazzi riots or the later Fenian troubles. By the middle fifties the benefits of a new, more continentally oriented trade, the outgrowth of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, gave Montrealers a greater sense of confidence in the future.

Municipal government underwent changes, both in structure and in its centre of activities. The city hall proved too small for the expanding department offices, so part of Bonsecours Market was fitted as offices while the city hall received a new wing to house an assembly room and concert hall. The right to choose the mayor passed from the council to the people, while the number of aldermen for each suburban district increased from two to three. The enlarged council of twenty-seven members was required to meet at least every three months. Charles Wilson, the first mayor to be chosen by popular vote, was succeeded by Wolfred Nelson, the 1837 rebel who had returned to resume medical practice in Montreal. Nelson was elected to the Assembly under Union, twice became mayor, was one of the first harbour commissioners, and became inspector of prisons – a long and honoured road from the day when he wrote in prison, 'We rebelled neither against Her Majesty's person nor her government, but against colonial misgovernment.'

The fine of £100 levied for refusal to accept the office of mayor, imposed by the council to force reluctant nominees into harness, was evidently not necessary once the office became elective. Certainly Charles Wilson seemed to have acceded graciously to the demands of the people for three years, even though his portrait was slashed by citizens annoyed at his handling of the Gavazzi affair. Alessandro Gavazzi was a defrocked Barnabite monk who continued to wear monastic garb when addressing huge audiences in England, Ireland, and the United States on the subject of Italian independence. In Quebec City, his reception at the Free Church turned into a tempest when some Irish Catholics threw him out of the pulpit.

In Montreal, a group of Irish Catholics protested to Mayor Wilson against Gavazzi's being permitted to lecture in the city concert hall. Wilson forbade the use of the hall, but the promoters circumvented this by acquiring Zion Church for the lecture. Wilson made no objection, stating that the protests had not been against the lecture but against the use of a public building. However, precautions were taken to the extent of stationing a number of policemen outside the church, with a detachment of the recently arrived Camerons concealed near by.

Mayor Wilson was on hand with the Riot Act in his back pocket, which he soon attempted to read over the tumult of an attacking Irish party that tried to force an entry into the church. Somehow shots were fired. The Mayor was accused of having given the order to the troops to fire, as was Colonel Hogarth of the Camerons. Both denied the charge. In the melee, some fifteen people were killed and twenty-five wounded, by shots, stones, or missiles. Gavazzi was once again hurried off, this time by two Protestant clergymen in a closed carriage to the

wharf where the *Iron Duke* waited to carry him to La Prairie, whence he made his way to the American border. Among those attending the lecture had been members of the Institut Canadien, including Dr. Emery Coderre, who hastened to set up a temporary operating room in the church to care for the wounded.

Mayor Wilson ordered an inquiry into the riot, but its findings were kept secret and no arrests were made, even though Judge Charles Mondelet openly charged the Irish of Griffintown with the offence. The city remained uneasy for some days. Soldiers of the Camerons were waylaid and beaten and someone sneaked into city hall to slash the head and shoulders out of the portrait of the Mayor.

This clash between Irish Catholics and those non-Catholics who attended the Gavazzi lecture accented the slowly expanding Protestant growth within the city. Its population of 57,715 in 1851 was predominantly Catholic – 41,000 either French or Irish – while the Church of England adherents numbered only 4,000. Presbyterians amounted to some 2,800.

A curious blend of support and hostility was exhibited by Protestants towards the anti-clericalism of the Institut Canadien. When Institut parliamentarians pressed for the abolition of seigneurial rights, Protestants cheered, but when this was coupled with a demand for the abolition of the clergy reserves, high churchmen were aroused, for the bill would deprive all denominations of any revenue accruing from the reserved lands which had been granted for the support of the Church of England. No wonder Governor Elgin shook his head, commenting, 'I am convinced that Lafontaine's French party is the only one which can or will arrest this country in its progress towards . . . views of extreme democrats . . . and yet these madmen – the Tories and Churchmen – cannot find terms of abuse sufficiently strong for those who are in fact preserving from destruction all that they profess to value.'

The churchmen, among whom was newly elected Mayor Wolfred Nelson, began plans for an Anglican cathedral, but it was not until 1857 that the foundation stone for Christ Church was laid. However, in the field of higher education, McGill began to gird itself up. With the appointment of William Dawson as principal in 1855, and a new charter granted in 1852, the college emerged from its long lethargy, so that by 1860 it had an enrolment of fifty.

The Irish Montrealers, most of whom had fled from famine-ridden Ireland only to suffer typhus or cholera, and live in flooded huts in Griffintown, had tenaciously clung to life and somehow managed to survive – so much so that by 1856 the need for a forceful spokesman for their interests was felt. Their choice fell upon Thomas D'Arcy Mc-

Gee, one of the Young Ireland enthusiasts who had to flee his native land in 1848 after a promising start in journalism and a less promising venture into revolt. In the United States he came into conflict with Bishop Hughes of New York for his attack on the Church hierarchy in his paper, the *Nation*. In Boston, McGee founded the *American Celt*, and over a period of five years he became reconciled to the Church hierarchy and disenchanted with the radical Irish party in the United States. Thus, when the Montreal Irish invited him to become their champion, he willingly accepted.

To McGee is due the credit for curbing the drift of the Montreal Irish towards the orbit of American republicanism and Irish secret-society violence. It was a case of the right man in the right place at the right time. The decade of the sixties was a proving ground not only for Canadian unity but for Montreal's capacity to coalesce, as it had in the past, the jarring racial elements that sought bread and butter within its gates.

Amicable relations had marked the Irish absorption into the French heart of Montreal from as early as 1817 when the Sulpician priest, Father Richard Jackson, first noticed the faces of strangers coming out of Bonsecours Church on a Sunday morning. On accosting them, he learned that they were natives of Ireland, some thirty or forty of whom had settled in the city. It was Father Richard, as he was affectionately known, who invited them into the vestry the following Sunday and formed them into a small separate congregation with himself as pastor. By 1825 the steady flow of Irish into the city resulted in the overflow of the Irish congregation going to old Notre Dame Church at Place d'Armes where, because the service was in the familiar Latin, the Irish could find spiritual comfort in reciting the mass with French Canadians. The newly appointed first Bishop of Montreal, Monsignor Lartigue, named Father Patrick Phalen, his first ordained priest, to minister to the Irish attending Notre Dame Church, and by 1829 the flock had increased to such a size that Bishop Lartigue decided to form the Irish into a distinct congregation, using the old Recollet Church on Notre Dame Street, with Father Phalen as pastor. Still the Irish came, and many again turned to the French churches when they found the Recollet Church too crowded to accommodate all. Truly *La Minerve* could claim, 'Les Irlandais sont reçus ici comme des frères.'

The uprising in Ireland in 1848 awakened fears in Montreal of repercussions among the Irish element. Lord Elgin expressed his private concern to his wife in 1848: 'We are still quiet here and all attempts by the American Irish to stir disaffection have failed. It is impossible to say what may be the effect of disturbances in Ireland on the population

here, which consists so largely of Irish Catholics.' However, two months later, he reported: 'We have on the whole been preserved from the evils with which you have been suffering in Europe . . . though my excellent neighbours, the Yankees . . . happened unfortunately to conceive that the affectation of a prodigious sympathy with Ireland, coupled with the promise of plunder in Canada, would be an excellent bait for certain sections of sovereign people whose votes may go far to determine the election of the President of the Union.' These early fears that the American Irish might attempt to seduce the allegiance of the Irish in Canada grew more pronounced until they crystallized in the more direct threats of the Fenians in the sixties.

It was against this background that Thomas D'Arcy McGee pledged his fidelity to the Montreal Irish in 1856, when he began publishing the *New Era*. Within the year McGee was nominated as the Irish candidate for a Montreal seat in Parliament. His entry into the Montreal Irish community and newspaper world was not without its antagonisms. George Edward Clerk, the editor of the *True Witness*, which was devoted exclusively to Catholic interests, did not relish a rival Catholic paper, though the Bishop of Montreal and the Irish clergy supported McGee's venture. The McGee of 1857 was not the ardent young rebel of 1848. His domicile in the United States had given him a distaste for the liberal secular tendencies he found there, and the hostility of American nativism, which kept the Irish 'an alien population, camped but not settled in America, with foreign hopes and aspirations, unshared by the people among whom they lived', made McGee regard monarchial Canada and particularly Catholic Montreal as more congenial to his temperament. His early flirtation with the reformers in Montreal soon evaporated, and by the early sixties he had moved politically towards the moderate Tory position. This shift in political direction provoked division in the ranks that had invited him to Montreal. Bernard Devlin, who was to become McGee's most vitriolic political foe, had been among those signing the invitation to him.

Within four years of McGee's arrival in Montreal, the city had thrown off the commercial gloom of the early fifties, and by 1860 was preparing to celebrate with all pomp and circumstance the official opening of Victoria Bridge, a tubular structure to carry rail lines into the city proper, at whose foot nestled the Irish community of Griffintown. Queen Victoria had been invited to officiate, but she delegated the Prince of Wales in her stead. To deck the city in appropriate apparel, the government granted $20,000 towards an exhibition of arts and manufactures, while city council poured $12,000 into festival activities such as embellishing Viger Square and clothing the Mayor in a scarlet gown

trimmed with ermine, a cocked hat, an impressive chain of office, and a dress sword.

Bustle, boom, and broom swept through the city, transforming its principal thoroughfares into paved streets with newly painted houses, whitewashed fences, fountains, and trees. The city garrison added to the colour. In the city of 70,000, militia strength was 2,000. The four regular regiments included a battalion of Grenadiers and Scots Fusilier Guards, two batteries of Royal Artillery, and two companies of Royal Engineers.

In the militia was the newly raised One Hundredth Prince of Wales Canadian Regiment, mostly Irish Catholics who, following the tradition of Irish soldiers of fortune, sent 110 men overseas in 1859 for service during the Indian mutiny. They did not get so far, but served at Malta and Gibraltar. They were the first volunteer unit of infantry in Montreal. As political agitation in Montreal mounted during the early sixties, the new regiment did not escape unscathed. On St. Patrick's Day in 1865, just a year prior to the first Fenian attack, the first company of the regiment, under Captain Hanson, was ordered removed from the list of volunteer militia, 'the officers and men of this company having been guilty of a gross act of insubordination'.

When put to the test on the Quebec frontier against the Fenians in 1866, however, the Prince of Wales Rifles stood firm. Only one sergeant-major, named O'Mahoney, deserted after giving 'utterance to treasonable sentiments' at Bonaventure Station as the regiment was embarking for the frontier. Bernard Devlin, the colonel of the regiment, complained of the 'hardship of fighting against his own countrymen' and suggested to George Etienne Cartier that he be sent as an emissary to the New York Fenian headquarters to persuade them to call off the invasion. When this suggestion met with a cool reception, Devlin joined his regiment at the front, though it was rumoured that he pretended illness for a few days when news was received that the Victoria Rifles had been attacked by Fenians.

The 1866 Fenian attacks proved a bubble, but repercussions were felt throughout the country, nowhere more strongly than in Montreal. Reports that Montreal Fenians had planned, not only to assassinate McGee and to assist the invaders by attacks on the Grand Trunk and Victoria Bridge, but also to provoke a run on the banks to add to the confusion, and to fire some towns, produced hostility towards the Irish. There had been some slight signs of disaffection in Montreal. Eighty railwaymen, almost all of them Irish, had refused to join a special volunteer company, and a few policemen and civil servants, five of whom were Irish, refused to take a loyalty oath. Some men had been arrested

for trying to seduce regular and volunteer forces with promises of better pay and rank in the Fenian armies to the south.

The Fenian raids were soon overshadowed by the larger issue of Confederation, and it was in the political arena that antagonisms erupted into violence. The bitterest hostility was directed against McGee who had called the Fenian fraternity a political leprosy and had urged his fellow Irishmen to avoid it 'as you would the jaws of hell'. McGee infuriated the local Fenians by scoffing at their threats on his life, and finally, when goaded into exasperation by ruffians who pelted him with stones on the streets of Montreal and gangs who shouted him down whenever he attempted to speak in public, he decided on a frontal attack. In August 1867, just before the general elections for the newly created Dominion, McGee published a series of articles in the Montreal *Gazette* designed to expose the growth of Fenianism in the city 'because this conspiracy in Montreal, having now emerged from their covers, having decided in secret council who shall and who shall not have freedom of speech in this city, these emissaries and correspondents of the New York Fenians have attempted to take the destinies of the city under their control by force and violence, and to elevate one of their chief patrons into a legislator.' McGee was referring to his opponent in the election, Bernard Devlin, president of the St. Patrick's Society since 1864, colonel of the Prince of Wales Rifles, prominent lawyer, and brother of O. J. Devlin, who was one of the chief promoters of the Fenian-inspired Hibernian Society of Montreal. Associated politically with Devlin were the Reformer and Rouge parties in the city, including Luther Holton, editor of the *Witness*, and Médéric Lanctot, editor of the Rouge *Le Pays*, whom *La Minerve* described as 'one of the most violent of the Institut Canadien', and who was accused of having founded 'Le Club St. Jean Baptiste . . . une société secrète, affiliée au fénianisme, comme nous l'assure le témoignage irrécusable d'un saint évêque'.

McGee pulled no punches in his denunciation of Devlin. At the conclusion of his articles in the *Gazette*, he asked the citizens of Montreal to stand by him and 'extinguish the hopes of the clique of Fenian conspirators who still remain in Canada and every man of whom are now active backers of Mr. Devlin'.

Though Rouge votes would go to Devlin, McGee was assured at a meeting of French-Canadian electors of Montreal at the Mechanics' Institute on August 21, 1867, that he would receive the majority of French-Canadian votes in the St. Joseph and St. Antoine districts. But so bitter did the contest between the two Irishmen become that Devlin, in an election speech at Victoria Square, accused McGee of 'adopting

this political trick of turning informer to keep him out of the slough' and contemptuously referred to McGee as an 'approver, an informer, the Canadian Titus Oates'.

At the close of voting McGee won by a majority of 262, though Devlin led in the Irish ward of St. Ann's by about 128 votes. His supporters sought some consolation in attacking McGee's headquarters at the Mechanics' Hall on Great St. James Street, breaking windows and firing shots that wounded two men. The Catholic *True Witness* described the mob as 'rowdies without distinction of race, creed, or party' and urged that 'we all abstain from prolonging bad feeling between different classes of Her Majesty's loyal subjects'. The Bleu journal *La Minerve* was more caustic.

> Mr. Devlin has the satisfaction of having played a most unhappy role. . . . He has appealed to all the worst passions, the most odious prejudices, to unpardonable violence. Since the campaign began, Mr. Devlin has not had the courage even once to meet Mr. McGee in public confrontation. . . . But the eminent orator [McGee] has brought honour to Lower Canada throughout its communities and the result must be considered as the triumph of sane doctrines over the worst passions, above all over Fenianism.

That was the tribute to the once-rebel Irishman turned Canadian patriot given a few brief years before Canada set out on 'the Road to Confederation', as Donald Creighton has titled one of his great works. McGee was to be among the leaders who took that road, and having taken it he became the new confederated Canada's first political martyr.

Part Three

When writing of the past and of men long since dead an author is bound by circumstances to confine his research to documents and other material that has been left behind, and accept them as accurate historical records. When the same writer comes to his own times, to events recent and current (and to the people who were involved), he is confronted by circumstances completely different, about which he is bound to have formed opinions. Try as he will, he is bound to let such opinions slip in here and there without even realizing it. In writing of what are largely my own times in Montreal, the effort to avoid expressing personal views of men and events, even by inference, has been as great as is humanly possible. Yet it is only fair that one should make this point clear as the reader comes into contact in these pages with the Montreal of today. The men who left behind notes and records of another century were human and fallible too. How else does history happen?

LESLIE ROBERTS

16 The New Beginning

When McGill University's young Faculty of Law held its convocation ceremonies on Wednesday, May 4, 1864, the valedictorian who spoke for the eleven graduating barristers was a young man named Wilfrid Laurier, from whom much more would be heard in Montreal, and far beyond, in the days to come.

1864 was also the year when the visiting delegates from Upper and Lower Canada were the practically self-invited guests at the meeting of the Atlantic colonies, whose representatives had gathered in Charlottetown to discuss the possibility of Maritime union. Why not, asked the unbidden but nevertheless welcomed visitors, all throw in our lot together? After a second conference in the city of Quebec, to which the invitations *were* official, a scheme for confederation was agreed upon. In 1866 representatives of the four founding provinces met with the British colonial Governors in the old Westminster Palace Hotel facing Parliament Square in London's Tothill Street to prepare a final draft of the British North America Act, which was subsequently enacted by the British Parliament. Thus was the Canadian nation born. (Ninety-odd years later Quebec intellectuals were speaking of the outcome as 'two nations in one country' – an exercise in semantics that merely emphasizes

the difference in interpretation and definition that Canada's two founding ethnic groups, French and English, place on the word 'nation'. The B.N.A. Act still 'resided' in London too.)

A phrase from the valedictory speech of the young Laurier is worth repeating as an opening statement for this account of what has happened to Montreal in the interval since Confederation, reflecting as it does the constantly changing attitudes of two main ethnic groups sharing a common community.

'I say it to our glory,' Laurier read from the painstakingly prepared text of his maiden public act of oratory, 'that the struggles of race are ended on Canadian soil. There is here now no other family than the human family, whatever the language they speak or the altars at which they kneel. There is glory in this fraternal union of which Canadians can never be sufficiently proud; mighty nations, indeed, might well come to us to seek a lesson in justice and humanity.' He was referring, of course, to the then 'united' provinces of Canada West and Canada East – Ontario and Quebec.

Writing more than a century later, one could wish to be able to say that in the interval no occasion has ever arisen on which the young barrister's words could honestly be called into question. Yet, less than three years later, Laurier himself – by then a brief-hungry young barrister, partner in the newly established firm of 'Laurier, Archambault and Desaulniers – Avocats' – was fighting Confederation, tooth and claw, in his adopted city, Montreal. As he and other young firebrands of the 'parti Rouge' (the small 'l' liberals of their day in what was still Lower Canada) saw what was afoot, French Canada was on the point of being swamped, caught in the middle between 1,300,000 English-speaking people west of the Ottawa and at least 200,000 more residing in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

In fairness to Laurier and his associate rebels in their fight against enlargement of the union, one is bound to add that his target was not the English-speaking people who would become his *concitoyens* in a brand new, largely self-governing country called the Dominion of Canada. The sights of Laurier, and those of all the rebellious young Rouges of the day, were trained primarily on the policies and person of George Etienne Cartier of the conservative, Establishment-minded Bleus. They envisaged Cartier not as the heroic figure destined to lead the unborn province of Quebec into Canada, the guise in which numerous works of formal history have pictured him, but as the living embodiment of the anti-survival of the French-Canadian people, the creature of what today would be called Big Business. (Cartier was legal adviser to the newly built Grand Trunk Railway.) Equally, they

were doing battle with the ultramontanism of the Church hierarchy and were against all clerical intervention in secular affairs, with hard emphasis on matters political. But it was as a 'railroad lawyer' that Cartier was most obviously fair game for any lean and hungry young politician-lawyer.

But the Establishment (as the young Rouges saw it) triumphed. For his role in the business of midwifery, Cartier was rewarded with a baronetcy. His purposes and thinking were, in fact, so close to those of that other founding father, John A. Macdonald, as to give him almost the status of co-prime minister. To this day, all true-blue Conservatives (at least from outside Quebec's borders), seeking to pile on oratorical praise in the hope of picking up French-Canadian votes, invariably link the names of these two men as those of the principal founders. (Even the highway linking Toronto to the Quebec boundary has been officially christened the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway.)

Yet the years of political rebellion were much more than that to Laurier. His challenge was primarily that of youth to the upholders of the *status quo*, with the result that Confederation itself was almost a side issue – a whip with which to beat the Establishment's man Cartier and the hierarchy that supported him. From these humble beginnings in Montreal, Wilfrid Laurier was to become the true voice of Canada's duality and the great Canadian of his time. To which one should add that, once Confederation had become a *fait accompli*, the Rouges (whose leader Laurier soon became) accepted it, and never sought to destroy but to strengthen it.

Our concern is not with political partisanship, however, except in so far as, from time to time, its struggles have had direct and occasionally harsh repercussions in Montreal. Our concern is with Montreal itself, with the role it played in the past and which it still plays in the Canada of today. At the time of Confederation it was the indisputable commercial-financial capital city of the country. A majority of the population spoke French as their mother tongue – and worked for a handful of English-speaking business leaders, as did the vast majority of those other Montrealers who spoke English to each other.

The Montreal of the pre- and early-Confederation years was the jumping-off place for the great enterprises that were to fling open the gates to this vast northern half of the continent, just as two centuries earlier it had been the point of departure of the great explorers who carried the banners of France all the way to the mouth of the Mississippi. Subsequently it had been the home base of the Scottish and other fur-traders who had made their way beyond the Grand Portage at the head of Lake Superior as far as the distant Pacific – and 'cashed in'

their fortunes in Montreal. Now the times were different. But the spirit of questing adventure was the same.

The headquarters of the Grand Trunk was in Montreal, and the new railway was stretching its tentacles southeast to Portland, Maine, in the east, and to Chicago in the west, to open new markets for the young Canada. That engineering marvel, the tubular Victoria Bridge, already spanned the St. Lawrence at Montreal. To the average Montrealer it was one of the wonders of the world, although Cartier's opponents vowed it represented an attitude that would be the ruin of the country. An influx of foreign goods, they said, would be 'dumped' into the inexperienced Canadian market. In rebuttal, Cartier replied that it would carry our produce out – overland to Chicago and the American midwest and, more important, across the Eastern Townships and the border to the sea at Portland, and thence to the markets of the world. Neither view, looking back over the decades, could be called precisely accurate. (Portland was never mentioned when the men of the interior provinces spoke persuasively to 'the Maritimers'.)

Soon Montreal would also be the western terminus of the government-owned Intercolonial, the railroad designed to tie with twin ribbons of steel to the rest of the budding country its Atlantic provinces. This had been at least part of the bait that Macdonald, Cartier, and the other 'inland' founders had used to convince the Maritimers that they would find new, wide-open markets beyond the Restigouche, while the trade of central Canada would flow east and over the docks of Halifax. The Haligonians nevertheless *could* think in terms of the Montreal-Portland line – and *did*. Thus the promise to link Halifax to Montreal with a railway was no valid argument with which to make an impression on the Nova Scotians.

Why did the four British North American colonies confederate at all?

One of the persistent mistakes men tend to make about their own history is to over-simplify the reasons why great events happened as they did. The mists of the past tend to fog the lenses through which we try to look backward, so that the picture we see often becomes blurred. Historians often seek only evidence which fits the pattern which they are endeavouring to create, with the result that evidence that might tend to support another kind of conclusion is simply not considered (a fact which in the past has been painfully obvious in the teaching of Canadian history in the two school systems of the province of Quebec). With these warning notes, one can fairly proceed to set down one's own estimate, leaving it to the reader (especially if he should be a Professor of History) to agree, to contradict, or to argue.

There was one central reason for Confederation, held by all who

supported it, and local side issues which often got in the way of the main debate. That central reason was the belief that if the separate colonies could not find a way to hang together, they were sure to hang separately, sooner or later, with the United States of America acting as executioner. This was the common fear, no matter whether those who felt it lived on the Maine–New Brunswick border, in Montreal, in the Eastern Townships of Quebec, or where Ontario touches New York state at Niagara. The fear may have been groundless. But it was the touchstone of Confederation, none the less. (Nova Scotia, which shares no common boundary with the United States, was the least anxious of the four 'originals' to form a partnership.) There is no arguing the point that Canada was conceived in the vortex of the American Civil War, and born in its aftermath.

Men may have had other reasons, for or against Confederation, in a widely separated number of places. But all who were for the union shared one thing: the fear of American military and economic power. Unless the British colonies could make common cause they might well be conquered, either by piecemeal absorption at the United States' leisure, or even as the result of a violent and bloody invasion. (The United States acquired Alaska by purchase in the very year that Canada was born, a fact that had no small bearing on British Columbia's application to join Confederation.)

Strange muddles arose in the public mind, and in the actions of men as well, in respect to the relations, first between the individual British colonies and subsequently between the newly formed Dominion and the neighbouring republic, at the time of the Civil War and during the aftermath. But certain factors appear with clarity, especially in relation to Montreal.

First, the city's people, generally, were clearly sympathetic to the northern cause, to the point of giving sanctuary to the escaping Negro, whereas Britain showed strong leanings towards the Confederacy. To compound confusion, there was in Montreal a body of anti-northerners who had managed to escape into neutrality across the U.S. border – an over-enthusiastic group of 'patriots' who, prior to Confederation, had carried out an abortive raid on the town of St. Albans in near-by northern Vermont. Whether this brought on the first, easily repulsed Fenian Raid into the Eastern Townships in reprisal is beside the point. The central points are that neither the townsfolk of Montreal nor their administrators had any association with the St. Albans foray, or its organizers, and that the Irish-American Fenian Brotherhood was pledged to remove the British flag from the North American continent. To these must be added the fact that, for a time, after as well as before

Confederation, the government in Washington chose 'to look the other way' as the Fenians' 'private army' made its sporadic raids on Canadian territory. In terms of actual fighting and bloodshed, the raids never amounted to much. Viewed from here, there is about them almost an air of comic-opera warfare. But to the people of British North America they constituted a real threat that had not a little to do with the comparative ease with which Confederation was brought off, certainly in what are now Ontario and Quebec.

Confederation did not immediately lay the ghost, however. Before Canada was three years old, dispatches to the Dominion government from the British ambassador in Washington warned the Canadians, especially in the area between Montreal and the border, to be on the lookout for raids-in-force. The city was promptly agog with excitement and recruiting, with the calling up of militia units and the standing-to-arms of the garrison proper. Then came the 'marching out to war'.

Early in April 1870, Colonel Chamberlain left the city for the Eastern Townships to assemble the militiamen of the rural areas. In Montreal proper, volunteers were recruited by Lieutenant-Colonel Fletcher. The response was enthusiastic. Military bands blared patriotic marches as recruits drilled in the city's streets. The French Canadians' response to the call to arms was even greater than of their English-speaking fellow-citizens. *Le pays* was under threat. Something had to be done about it.

The weeks passed. The soldiers moved closer and closer to the border of Vermont. The British regulars and Montreal militiamen proceeded to Stanbridge by train. Finally, early on May 25, no more than a few hours after the last firecracker lighted by a young Montrealer in honour of Queen Victoria's birthday had exploded or sputtered out, an 'army' of more than 200 Fenians under 'General' O'Neill crossed the border and endeavoured before dawn on the morning of May 25 to establish a foothold on a rise called Eccles Hill, midway between a mound known as Pigeon Hill and the village of Frelighsburg in the county of Missisquoi, some fifty miles from the city. According to official sources and the records of the Missisquoi County Historical Society, the Fenians were met at Cook's Corners by an advance scouting party of no more than seventy Canadians (with ample backing not far to the rear). Before the regulars and militiamen from Montreal could be brought up, however, the raiders were hurled back at Cook's Corners and Eccles Hill by local farmer-militiamen, raised and led by Asa Westover of Dunham, himself a farmer. Thus, before the Montreal troops even saw action, the Fenians had been hurled back into Vermont.

British regulars, the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, seven hundred strong, were near by, but do not appear to have taken part in the brief

clash. The encounter at Cook's Corners and the exciting events that preceded it might have produced tuneful music and an ironical libretto from Gilbert and Sullivan. But it was a serious business to any man or woman then living in Montreal, or in one of the hamlets scattered between the south bank of the St. Lawrence and Canada's Vermont–New Hampshire boundary.

So ended the last of the Fenian raids on Canada. By nightfall on May 25 'General' O'Neill's forces were gone, never to return. But the 'Battle of Eccles Hill' remains enshrined in history in a monument erected on the site in 1902 by the Missisquoi County Historical Society, with the assistance of the federal government.

The next day, May 26, 1870, President Ulysses S. Grant issued a cease-and-desist order to the Fenian Brotherhood. Uncle Sam was looking north at last. The abortive affair at Cook's Corners therefore ended the undeclared and unofficial 'war'. One cannot help wondering whether, if a similar step had been taken earlier by Grant, or by his predecessor, the British colonies in North America would have confederated at all. Certainly it was not brotherly love that brought us all together to live in uneasy partnership from 1867 on.

To make such a point takes us back to the moment of Confederation itself. How was it brought off? What feelings did it engender in the minds of *les Montréalais*? So far as those who supported the greater union were concerned – the English-speaking Establishment and their staunch supporters in the French-speaking community, the few French-Canadian men of wealth, and, much more important, the ultramontane Bishop Bourget of the local diocese and his colleague at Trois Rivières, Bishop Laflèche – the sooner the deeds were signed, the better. But to Wilfrid Laurier, by then a country editor and part-time politician in the Bois Franc country around Arthabaska, the greater union would be 'the tomb of the French race and the ruin of Lower Canada'. From Cartier, on the other hand, came such forthright words as, 'Shall we be content to maintain a mere provincial existence, when by combining we could become a great nation?' The words sounded much like those of Laurier's valedictory speech at McGill. And Cartier's views were to prevail.

What lay at the root of the opposition – not merely in Quebec, but from such men as Joseph Howe in Nova Scotia? Here one is forced to speculate on the motivations of men and can only conclude that much of the bitterness that was generated, especially among the young Turks of the Rouges, derived from the view that Confederation was being rammed down their throats by power-hungry men.

The British North America Act, which created the union by merging

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario into a single federal entity, already had been enacted into law by the Parliament in London by request of the then colonial governments. It became effective, as law, on July 1, 1867, until which time the people had not been consulted as to what their own wishes might be.

Then the founding fathers had to go to the country and ask the Canadians to elect their first Parliament. Thus the election became a belated referendum or plebiscite on the act of Confederation itself. Clearly the newborn province of Quebec was the keystone of the arch, which would either uphold the whole new structure or let it collapse in ruin. If French Canada were to follow the Rouges and vote the new government down, rejecting any deal made in the name of its people by Cartier without first so much as a 'by your leave', then Confederation was doomed from birth.

In the ensuing campaign of the autumn of 1867, Montreal's three seats could fairly be called the fulcrum on which the whole election turned, with special emphasis on the East seat which Cartier contested himself. He was opposed by Médéric Lanctot for the Rouges, a candidate who held the advantage of being a popular labour leader, seeking the votes of what was primarily a working-class district.

The battle lines were hard-drawn at last. Speeches on the hustings and in *assemblées contradictoires* (a political custom which had come down from the beginnings of free elections, according to which opposing candidates and their supporters spoke from a common platform, at times from the church steps after mass) were bitter in tone, certainly not distinguished so much by the subtle thrust of the verbal rapier as by the swinging of the broad-axe. To the deeply committed Rouges, any French Canadian who stood for Confederation was, *ipso facto*, a traitor to his own people.

But the Bleus and their leader, Cartier, had the Church and its bishops solidly on their side. All three Montreal ridings voted solidly for the Confederation candidates, Cartier, Workman, and D'Arcy McGee. Still another founder, Galt, one of Montreal's wealthiest citizens, who has often been credited with writing the terms of the Confederation pact, stood for election in Sherbrooke where he, too, scored a thumping victory.

Confederation won, hands down. Forty-three of Quebec's sixty-five seats returned Cartier's men. In Ontario the count was sixty-eight out of eighty-five. Anti-confederationists captured only three of New Brunswick's fifteen seats. Nova Scotia alone stood out – a land in which the eyes of the people still looked east across the Atlantic, no matter what Confederationist leaders had to say about railroads leading into the

interior and the markets they would create. Thanks mainly to the fight inspired by Joseph Howe, Charles Tupper and two others were the only Conservatives elected, the Liberals capturing sixteen seats.

Thus, by a vote of more than three to one, Lower Canada had voted to become the Province of Quebec in a brand new country, in which its people would occupy a minority position in politics, as, in Montreal, they did in commerce and finance. The victory was not Cartier's alone, however, although history and legend have made him its chief architect. Primarily the victory was that of the ultramontane bishops of Mother Church and their instructed *curés*, the priests in their parishes. Without them Cartier might well have been nowhere. Looking back, a century later, such participation in secular political affairs, carried out in full public hearing, is almost impossible to imagine. Thus one might almost say that the Roman Catholic Church was the real support of Confederation.

The Confederation election was a beginning, not an end. The troubles that have marked and sometimes marred the pleasant, highly civilized, twin life of Montreal already were beginning to brew. A majority of the city's population were French-Canadian in origin. Money, and the power that goes with it, was mainly in the hands of the English-speaking minority or, rather, of a few of that community's members who, in a word, 'ran' Montreal. The same words and clichés were echoed by the 'new' separatists of the 1960s, despite the existence of a provincial government at Quebec which would have been a joy to the heart of a young Laurier, and the power of Quebec's voice in the country's councils at Ottawa.

What manner of place was Montreal on the first day of July 1867, when Canada became what was tantamount to a self-governing country? It was the indisputable metropolis of the young nation, three parts French-speaking in population as against one part English-speaking in a total of approximately 100,000 people. But among a few of those who spoke English as their mother tongue was centred not only virtually all the capital and industry of the community but, as well, the source of business-making funds from abroad, which meant London. At the moment of Confederation Montreal already was Canada's major seaport, although a thousand miles from the open sea and closed by ice through five months of the year. Five hundred vessels of one kind and another berthed in its harbour in the summer of 1867. The Lachine Canal had been completed some time earlier to carry vessels to a draught limit of fourteen feet, and the river below the canal, eastward from approximately the foot of McGill Street, had been dredged to carry the new steamships of the Allan Line during the months of

summer – a fortnightly service between 'break-up' and the freezing of the river. Along the banks of the canal and the basins that stemmed off its lower reaches a considerable industry had sprung up, including three large flour mills and the beginnings of the heavy industries that would soon become the backbone of the city's and country's commerce. Montreal was, as well, the centre of Canada's early railway network, soon to stretch its tentacles all the way to the Pacific coast. Meanwhile Quebec City, although the seat of the provincial government, languished, virtually by-passed by the railway, and having lost its former great ship-building industry with the coming of steel ships and steam.

The city of Montreal had stretched northwards to the lower slopes of Mount Royal and had begun to reach out, east and west, beyond its two 'ends'. Horse-drawn streetcars travelled the principal thoroughfares, their floorboards covered with straw and the cars themselves warmed in the harsh winters with the barrel-shaped stoves long known as 'Quebec heaters'. Few streets were paved. In the long winters the snow piled high along the sides, so high, in fact, that people walking along the shovelled sidewalks (kept cleared, by ordinance, by the individual property-owner) knew of the movement of traffic in the roadway only by the tinkling sound of out-of-sight bells, screwed or riveted to the shafts of passing sleighs.

The highest 'business blocks' were no more than four storeys, more likely to be two. The business district proper moved no farther from the river than the narrow east-west St. James Street, which boasted the better shops and the 'magnificent' St. Lawrence Hall, a hotel which was the city's pride, the rendezvous of its politicians, the scene of its major functions, and renowned for its cuisine and the comfort of its quarters, said by some to rival the best to be found in Europe.

Richer families built pretentious homes of brick (produced in kilns across the river, near what is now the town of La Prairie), on the higher outskirts. But the average citizen's home was still of wooden frame, with jutting veranda. Civic services were rudimentary, as was the delivery service for such essential domestic commodities as bread and milk. Medical services were but little better and epidemics, especially of such diseases as smallpox and scarlet fever (both 'killers' a century ago), recurred constantly. The latest innovation was probably gaslight, but most homes were still dimly illuminated by night with the old-fashioned coal-oil lamp.

Parks were virtually non-existent, although the homes of the well-to-do were surrounded by spacious grounds. The owners were careful to preserve their own maple trees for tapping every spring, the running sap to be boiled down to syrup or made into maple sugar for domestic

use, in many cases on the owner's premises. The rest of the community huddled together, in many streets in rows of identical houses in which long flights of outside stairways reached upward towards the main doorway leading into the family living quarters.

Education was scanty and for most children limited to the primary level. Its higher reaches were designed only for the few and, throughout the province as well as the city, even this fell below the standards set by neighbouring Ontario or distant Nova Scotia. None of it was compulsory, with a resulting high illiteracy rate. Such as it was, its division was sharply Protestant and Catholic, English and French. In between was the considerable Irish-origin population, with a foot in each camp, but still 'keeping itself to itself', mainly in the district that became St. Ann's Ward and below it in Point St. Charles. Thus the not necessarily premeditated effect was to divide, or compartmentalize, its people, religiously and ethnically.

The two principal language groups, tragically, were beginning to move apart, even to withdraw into their own neighbourhoods. Those who spoke French (and the reference is to what may be termed 'average' citizens) first moved eastward, then, as population grew, spread north, but to the east of 'the mountain'. The English-speaking burgher moved westward, then, as time passed, in turn spread out to the north, but to the west side of the mountain.

Thus from Confederation forward the history of Montreal becomes largely a tale of two cities, one French-speaking, one English in origin – a division that men of good will have been doing their level best to overcome from that day to this. None of this, of course, is visible to the casual visitor today, who sees only the great cosmopolitan city which Montreal has become. But at the level of ordinary folk the division remains and seems more than likely to continue. At Confederation Montreal's population was preponderantly French, while the money that turned the wheels of its commerce was almost entirely in the hands of the English-speaking community. Prominent in this community were the descendants of the creators of the great fur-trading fortunes, the original entrepreneurs of the Beaver Club. These men ran the banks and other financial institutions, as well as the city's industry. The smaller merchants in the main were of French extraction. But the bulk of the populace in both groups worked for a handful of the well-to-do English-speaking men and firms. Today they would be called the Establishment. In the years immediately following Confederation they were 'Cartier's English friends'.

17 'Two Streaks of Rust'

To create a country on paper, and to make it function in terms of what has been set down, are two very different operations, as the fathers of the Canadian Confederation discovered before the ink had dried on the British North America Act. The turmoils of misunderstanding quickly became evident. But, from the beginning, one fact emerged with crystal clarity and that was the ascendancy of Montreal in the young country's affairs – despite the fact that what was already Canada's principal city was also the point of origin of most of the country's turmoils, as it still is. The paradox of the great city on the St. Lawrence is that it is simultaneously (especially among its French-speaking majority) cosmopolitan and worldly-minded and at times strangely parochial underneath its worldly veneer.

The new country quickly reached out from ocean to ocean – granting provincial status to Manitoba in 1870 and to British Columbia in the following year, and acquiring control over Rupert's Land from the Hudson's Bay Company, as it had been given the right of eminent domain over the Northwest Territories by Britain. Stubborn little Prince Edward Island, which had rejected Confederation at Charlottetown and Quebec, finally joined the others in 1873. Canada now spanned the continent, reached north to the Arctic Sea, and was a country greater

in size than the United States, though its population was barely three million.

Of these approximately one-third were of the original French stock, some of whom could trace their family presence back to Maisonneuve's day. As each new expansionary movement occurred (with the exception of Manitoba, with its considerable population of French-speaking Métis, and others of pure French origin) the dilution, so feared by the Rouges of Quebec, became persistently greater. Moreover, although Montreal itself, predominantly French-speaking, was the leader of Canadian expansion, it was dominated mainly by English-speaking entrepreneurs – a problem with which the great city was still struggling a century later.

The dominance of Montreal in the new Canada sprang from two primary interconnected roots. Montreal was the focal point of development of the country's transportation system, without which Canada could not grow, and of a banking complex which in turn was bound to develop a close connection with the expansion of transportation, on the one hand, and with the resulting commerce of the country, on the other.

It is against this background that one must envisage the Montreal of the early years of Canada's nationhood. In 1867 the Grand Trunk already reached from Rivière du Loup in the east to Sarnia in the west. Under the Confederation agreement the two Atlantic provinces were guaranteed a rail connection to the central market. A considerable number of short independent lines were already in operation in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. These the new federal government quickly acquired by purchase or expropriation. The bill to build without delay the remaining links was introduced by Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald himself at the first session of Canada's first Parliament. Thus, the agreement to join Halifax and Saint John to Montreal, via the government-owned Intercolonial Railway, was carried through promptly, and at least one 'Maritime promise' had been met.

Meanwhile, British Columbia, frightened though it was of 'American aggression', had made the building of a transcontinental rail line, across the broad expanse of western emptiness to link it to the more populous 'east', a basic condition of its entry into Confederation. The answer was the Canadian Pacific Railway, whose intricate finance and construction story is perhaps the most labyrinthine in all Canada's strange railway history.

How it was done is seen in such a variety of ways, ranging from the view that it was conceived in iniquity and shapen in sin, to the equally strongly held estimate that it was the single factor that made Canada a nation in fact as well as on paper, that truth and myth become at times inseparable.

What cannot be debated, however, is that the point of origin of all that happened in the creation of the C.P.R. of today was Montreal. But before the story ended and the railway reached its western terminus at Port Moody on Burrard Inlet (Vancouver's great harbour) strange events were to happen. Politics in its most unpleasant aspects was to become involved. A government would fall, yet be returned to power five years later to carry the project through under an entirely new aegis.

On April 11, 1871, Cartier, who was still chief solicitor for the Grand Trunk, moved in the House of Commons that a Pacific railway should be constructed by private enterprise, but be given liberal assistance in grants of land, moneys from the public treasury, and other forms of assistance as they might be required. His motion was seconded by another Quebecer, Galt, and carried without difficulty. It is reasonable to believe that Cartier had his Grand Trunk colleagues in mind as potential beneficiaries of this grandiose proposal. If so, he counted without the competition which was bound to arise for such a prize. Actually the Grand Trunk was not to be a major competitor for the Pacific railway charter. Its directors preferred the less risky route to the west via Chicago, while the Canadian government insisted on an all-Canadian line.

The first group that took shape was headed by Sir Hugh Allan who, of all Montrealers, could fairly be described as the most important man of commerce and finance of his time – steamship owner, banker, promoter of insurance and many other companies: the Croesus of Confederation. In seeking the necessary capital Allan turned to the United States, to men already involved in the promotion of railways and deeply, if invisibly, in backroom politics; and he apparently had little difficulty in finding partners. Soon another competitor for the charter appeared, a Toronto-based group headed by D. L. Macpherson.

Macdonald faced a difficult decision, for neither group was politically acceptable. On the face of it, the offer from the Allan combine seemed the sounder financially. But the presence of such a large portion of American capital and the lack of support from Ontario men were serious handicaps. The Macpherson group was weaker financially, and, besides, Macpherson was a close friend of Macdonald's and his getting the charter would almost certainly raise cries of political favouritism. The Prime Minister sought to have the two groups amalgamate, easing out the Americans. This was easier said than done. Macpherson was suspicious of Allan, and the Toronto group would have nothing to do with any such merger as long as American capital retained any influential position in the plan. Macpherson's suspicions were well founded, for Allan embarked on an incredible course of doubledealing. Seemingly

mesmerized by the idea of the Pacific railway he insisted on his own dominance in any amalgamated company. Beset by so much Canadian hostility to Yankee 'domination' of the proposed transcontinental line, Allan undertook to 'write off' his American colleagues; but in fact failed to do so, clearly hoping by this avoidance of the issue to bring all the embattled elements together.

Negotiations with Allan and Macpherson continued through the summer of 1872. It was only one of the many problems that beset Macdonald that year. In assessing the over-all political situation he had decided to call a federal election, and he was deeply involved all summer in the campaign. The reports from the hustings soon indicated that the government was in deeper trouble than he had expected, and in search of sorely needed campaign funds Macdonald and his associates turned to Allan.

Unfortunately for himself (and for the Canadian government), Sir Hugh was a compulsive letter-writer. In the most casual manner, he wrote to his associates of his schemings and of the cost of such dealings, in terms of cash or shares, for all manner of influential people in public life who, without suitable 'greasing', might well make trouble. He moved astutely against Cartier, still attached to the Grand Trunk interests, by attacking him where it would hurt most – among his constituents in Montreal East and among his Quebec followers in Parliament. Allan frankly admitted in letters to his American colleagues that he had suborned editors and writers in the French-language press, and had successfully put pressure on local politicians through their parish priests. He succeeded to the point that a surprised Cartier made the discovery that his personal supporters, even in his home riding, had been bought off behind his back. As a result the French leader soon, though not immediately, moved away from his Grand Trunk friends and came to support Allan and his associates. In his desperate (and vain) struggle for re-election in Montreal East Cartier also turned to Allan for funds. Later his enemies, and Allan's, were able to produce a private letter from him dated July 20, 1872, tersely demanding $200,000 for campaign purposes and actually specifying the destinations of certain amounts: no less than half the sum for the Honourable Hector Langevin for the general Quebec campaign, plus $50,000 for Cartier, $35,000 for Macdonald, and an extra $15,000 for Langevin, presumably for his personal campaign. The evidence suggests that Macdonald himself did not know the extent of Allan's donations and was only later aware how deeply compromised he might be. In any event his party narrowly won the election, squeaking by with 103 seats to 97 for the opposition; but Cartier was defeated.

After the election Allan continued to be intransigent about making concessions to the Macpherson group. Macdonald believed that Allan had disentangled himself from his American associates, but this was not true. In Chicago Allan's partners, hearing rumours from Canada, came to the conclusion that they were being double-crossed, not merely by Allan, to whom they had sent large sums for political distribution, but by the Canadian government itself. On the last day of 1872, McMullen, the head of the Chicago group, appeared at Macdonald's office and in a two-hour tussle laid before the Prime Minister the grimy record of his (McMullen's) dealings with Allan who, said the visitor speaking for his Chicago friends, had certainly acted as if he spoke for the Canadian government. No other inference, as the Chicagoans saw it, could be drawn. *Ergo*, they did not intend, he said, to sit still and see their deal 'snatched away from under their noses'. His evidence included a dismaying collection of Allan's highly indiscreet letters.

The Prime Minister denied ever having given Allan either promises or undertakings, and certainly not the right to speak for the Canadian government. If McMullen and his friends had a case, then it lay against Allan, not the Ottawa administration. The Chicagoan went away, carrying Macdonald's promise to investigate the matter thoroughly. He returned in late January, still breathing fire. Again there was nothing the Prime Minister could see to do, other than advise again that McMullen either seek a 'friendly' solution with Allan or bring suit. That the government had *not* sent Allan to Chicago the American group forthrightly refused to accept or believe. 'The Canadian government alone knew the address of our syndicate,' one of its members wrote Macdonald, implying that it was obviously the administration which had originated the negotiations Allan had conducted.

Things moved from bad to worse. The Toronto group by now would not touch any amalgamation in which Allan would play a leading role. Allan professed to Macdonald that he had completely broken off with Chicago when, in actual fact, he was still trying to pacify the syndicate and keep the Americans as an ace in the hole. Yet even in this murky atmosphere the government issued a new charter in which Allan was clearly a principal. In it the government pledged the Canadian Pacific vast free land grants in the west, plus a cash subsidy of $30,000,000.

Behind the scenes more trouble was brewing. Allan's lawyer was John Abbott, a strong supporter of the Conservative party. During Abbott's absence in England in February of 1873, a confidential clerk rifled his files and sold vital and damning papers to the Opposition. Sir Hugh had also gone to England in search of money for the railway from the Rothschilds, Baring Brothers, and other financial houses. He failed every-

where. Cartier, long a sick man, finally went to England to consult specialists who diagnosed his illness as incurable. On May 20, 1873, the Quebec leader died in a London nursing home. His body was brought back to Canada for a state funeral, held in Montreal on June 13.

Meanwhile the storm had broken. On April 2, 1873, Allan's bizarre dealings were exposed in the House of Commons by Lucius Huntington, the Opposition M.P. for Shefford, Quebec. At first Macdonald did not take Huntington's revelations too seriously. After all, he was simply talking about campaign funds. What could be wrong about that? Within the week the Prime Minister found himself faced with an increasingly unfavourable reaction in the House and from public opinion, and reluctantly granted Huntington's demand for an investigation.

For technical reasons the investigation moved slowly. Then came two more blows. The Montreal *Herald* published a number of Allan's compromising letters; and then came the damaging correspondence stolen from Abbott's files. This included a telegram from Macdonald and Cartier to Abbott, Allan's lawyer: 'Must have another ten thousand. Will be the last time of calling. Do not fail me. Answer today.' After this was made public, the term 'Pacific Scandal' became something more than a journalists' slogan; it had become a matter of cold fact.

In actuality, events down to this point constituted merely the first round in what was to become the political miracle that would make Montreal Canada's transportation capital and its role in the young Canada indisputably first. Macdonald and Cartier had fought a Dunkirk; with Langevin's aid in Quebec, Macdonald would still win the war.

When Parliament reassembled in October 1873, the Prime Minister knew he was in deep trouble as members of his own party began to cross the floor (notably Donald Smith, subsequently Lord Strathcona, of whom we shall hear more). On Wednesday, November 5, 1873, Macdonald called on the Governor General, Lord Dufferin, to tender his resignation and advise that Alexander Mackenzie of the Opposition be asked to form a government. So far as the public knew, the Canadian Pacific was a dead issue.

The years that Macdonald sat in opposition were unproductive in terms of any serious extension of a purely Canadian transportation system. Here a little, there a little, a few miles at a time, was all the encouragement the Grit government under Mackenzie had to offer. The railway battlefront, in fact, could be said to have swung away from the east-west dream and tended towards the north-south pull from the United States, with efforts in various places to establish what would be tantamount to feeder lines from Canadian points into the more settled and industrialized regions of the republic. Even this was not without

its impact on Montreal, however, for Donald Smith, who earlier had deserted Macdonald, had become involved as a participant in a company that was to build a railway line south from Winnipeg, in the course of which he had become associated with, among others, his cousin and fellow transplanted Scot, George Stephen, president of the Bank of Montreal.

Allan, of course, was gone from the railway scene forever. Stephen, on the other hand, some time earlier had been told by Smith of an opportunity which, although it may have appeared on the surface to be 'feeding the United States', had as its objective the securing of control of a main American line running east-west south of the border, ultimately to re-enter Canada in the far west, and so provide the transcontinental link between the distant, isolated young province of British Columbia and the developed regions of central Canada, so essential if British Columbia was to be kept Canadian. Fortunately, Macdonald regained power in time to forestall this development before it had passed the point of no return and to convince Stephen that if Canada were to grow, or even to remain an independent nation, its fate hung on construction of an all-Canadian route to the Pacific, paralleling the United States border, but on its northern side throughout.

Macdonald, disgraced, and defeated in Parliament in 1873 and at the polls in 1874, did not return to power in 1878 on the railway issue, but rather on what came to be known as the National Policy of 'selective' tariffs. This was designed to afford protection to Canada's industries from American competition, whereas the Liberals favoured a reciprocity arrangement which, according to Macdonald's campaign oratory, might well lead to political absorption. On this point, it is intriguing to note that the Conservatives took Quebec's French-speaking seats by considerably better than two to one, swept all six British Columbia ridings, and held a majority of constituencies in every province except New Brunswick.

Once again Prime Minister of Canada following the election held on September 17, 1878, Macdonald promptly set about looking for ways and means to make his railway dream come true. He found little welcome in 'the city' when he went to London in search of financial support. The Grand Trunk, whose true headquarters was still Britain, proved an opposition too powerful to overcome. Rail interests in the United States, and a large supporting press, scoffed constantly at the Canadians' wild dreams, as did influential British newspapers. In December 1878, the first train for St. Paul pulled away from its platform at St. Boniface (Winnipeg). By all surface indications Stephen, Smith, and the Canadian-born but now American railway promoter, James J. Hill, had

found a profit-making winner in their St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad. Macdonald moved quickly to halt the 'American invasion', however. At the outset Macdonald may have intended to even accounts with Donald Smith for his earlier political desertion. If so, the end of a feud was in sight. Soon the two men would have a common interest in the all-Canadian plan.

Stephen began to show interest in the Prime Minister's plans for a transcontinental line that would 'keep Canada Canadian'. After listening to various rumours and plans, even after giving the Grand Trunk one final opportunity to become principals, Macdonald came to terms with the syndicate organized by Stephen, Smith, and Duncan McIntyre, with minor shares to British and French interests and to Hill. The Canadian government would put up $25,000,000 in cash towards construction, plus western land grants totalling 25,000,000 acres. The new Canadian Pacific was in business. Time and again it would pass through deep travail, but before the end of 1878, when agreement was reached with Stephen, Montreal was secured for all time to come, or at least for the foreseeable future, as the transportation metropolis of the young nation.

During the construction period the opposition insisted that such a harebrained scheme as building a railroad through rocky wastes north of Lake Superior should never have been undertaken. Efforts were made to create scandals over special privileges granted to the Canadian Pacific in Ontario and elsewhere, and over the shifting of the originally planned route closer to the border across the plains and through the impregnable Selkirks at the Kicking Horse Pass, instead of by the much easier Yellowhead Pass. But construction forged steadily ahead, despite all this and great fiscal trouble.

Early in 1884, in deep distress after exhausting all sources of credit, including those of the Bank of Montreal, Stephen was forced to come back to the government of Canada seeking a further loan of $22,500,000, in exchange for which he was prepared to mortgage to Ottawa the whole main line of the railway and such parts of its land grants as remained in the railway's hands. To approve such a transaction and get it through the House was touch and go for the administration. The government party for a time was split down the middle and threatened with wholesale defections which would include half of its supporters from Quebec. Somehow Macdonald quelled the uprising. At last construction from the west met construction from the east at Craigellachie in the mountains of southern British Columbia. The first train from Montreal reached the Pacific Ocean at Port Moody, on the outskirts of what is now Vancouver, on November 7, 1885. The dream had come true in spite of all the government's and the C.P.R.'s tribulations, al-

though the 'official' and regular passenger service did not begin (with suitable fanfare) until June 28, 1886.

Such, in brief, is 'how the C.P.R. happened'. Our interest here, obviously, is what the impact of that happening was on the Montreal of its beginnings, as it still is on the Montreal of today. The men who created the first transcontinental line in North America were, or soon became, Montrealers. Stephen (soon knighted, and subsequently raised to the peerage as Lord Mount Stephen), the man of prepossessing dignity who was the real financial driving force, already was there as president of the Bank of Montreal. His was the picture of the solid banker and man of affairs of his day. His cousin, the more volatile Donald Smith (who became Lord Strathcona), once of the Hudson's Bay Company, Macdonald supporter, then opponent, then supporter again, forsook the middle west to build a mansion on Dorchester Street West which still stands at this writing, as does Mount Stephen's great house on Drummond Street (now the Mount Stephen Club). But there were others. J. J. Hill, the Canadian-born U.S. railway-builder, joined the original syndicate. Possibly his greatest contribution was finding William Cornelius Van Horne, the hard-driving, high-living, former general manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul. He persuaded Van Horne to join the C.P.R. and, in fact, to *build* it, except for the far-western reaches, which were constructed by one Onderdonk. Van Horne, too, became a Montrealer, with his mansion on Sherbrooke Street which housed one of North America's finest art collections.

In Britain, where politicians and journalists alike had scoffed at this madcap adventure, and where financiers had stood aside, there was now talk of the 'all red' – British and rapid – route to the Orient and elsewhere in the Pacific. The builders of the C.P.R. were turning their thoughts to populating the western plains, to hotels, to steamships, to extensions of their lines eastward to the Atlantic at Saint John, and to taking over the existing line connecting Montreal and Quebec on the north bank of the St. Lawrence.

Once again Montreal had asserted its dominance, thanks in at least some degree, no doubt, to its geographical situation as well as to the courage and aggressiveness of its men. As the missionary priests had set forth from the foot of the mountain in the seventeenth century, as the fur barons' canoes had headed west towards the Grand Portage in the eighteenth century, so, in the nineteenth, the Canadian Pacific (still called 'two streaks of rust' by its critics) spanned a continent, every mile of it on Canadian territory, with Montreal as the vital force in this drive to create a country reaching 'from sea to sea'. In a sense this status as the repeated 'jumping-off place' is the history of Montreal itself.

18 Disunity in Diversity

Scarcely had the ink dried on the contract of Confederation than Macdonald and Cartier found themselves in difficulties in the new and rapidly opening west. With the early aspects of settlement and the granting of provincial status to Manitoba in 1870, we have little concern here, for it clearly lacked any Montreal connection, except as Cartier and his friends looked towards the new province as potentially 'a little Quebec'. In make-up Manitoba was part French, part English, but most of the population were Métis, sons and daughters of the earlier fur traders and voyageurs who had married Indian women and produced a new *kind* of Canadian. This new group had adopted the Métis name to represent their special ethnic origin. The original male parent was of British extraction as often, perhaps, as of French. In 1870 the Métis were, in numerical terms at least, the predominant population group – and the province's 'new poor', due largely to the loss of their normal occupation as hunters and trappers, the migration of wildlife from the region, their unfitness for agricultural pursuits, and the fact that under the law they were regarded virtually as 'squatters'. These were a people essentially happy-go-lucky in outlook. The removal of the somewhat stern control of the Hudson's Bay Company without its replacement by

any equally strong authority may be said to have created a political vacuum, difficult for the new government of Canada to fill.

From such conditions, troubles – and a leader – were bound to arise. The leader was Louis Riel, one of the strangest and most bizarre characters ever to stride the Canadian stage, a man subject to recurrent bouts of mental derangement, part visionary, part demagogue, part patriot. To his enemies he appeared as a man of little consequence, and they held him responsible for the murder of Thomas Scott, a gritty-tongued Ontario Orangeman executed by the Métis in 1870. In death he became ten feet tall to French-speaking Montrealers, as if he were one of their own, rather than by accident of birth a hybrid, the personification of a cause, rather than a person in his own right.

But Riel's case aroused sympathy among English-speaking Montrealers, too. The bitterness of the Orange Order's attacks on the Métis and their leader, coupled with the view that Ontario was determined to make the new west *its* satellite rather than that of Quebec or Montreal (whether true or false), undoubtedly played its part in the whole Montreal attitude.

Riel established his first 'provisional government' at St. Boniface as early as 1869, when the territory was still called Assiniboia. A year later he was even given brief *de facto* recognition as its leader-administrator by Ottawa, largely through the efforts of Cartier and the support of the ultramontane clergy of Quebec. Following the Manitoba Act of 1870 the Métis problem seemed settled. It was, in fact, only dormant.

The influx of white English settlers, mainly from Ontario, in the early 1870s upset the balance of power in the new province, despite the efforts of Cartier and Bishop Taché of St. Boniface to maintain its role as 'the second Quebec'. This may well explain why their support of Riel continued. Riel was elected to the federal Parliament from the new province in 1871, but, when Cartier lost his Montreal East seat in the 1872 general election, Riel promptly resigned from the Commons to open a seat for his 'patron', a seat that Cartier occupied until his death in May 1873.

Riel again contested his old riding and won it easily in 1874. By then he was a man with a price on his head, however, for alleged involvement in the Scott affair. After his electoral victory Riel suddenly appeared in Ottawa to claim his status as a member of the House of Commons, was duly sworn, and as promptly vanished from the public ken. It was said that the Macdonald government, anxious to be rid of an embarrassing individual whose presence tended to disrupt relations between the government's Quebec and Ontario supporters, had provided him with generous funds with which to leave the country. Actually Riel had taken refuge with the ultramontane Alphonse Desjardins, a

staunch Bleu of Montreal. Yet within a matter of months his host was forced to commit his strange guest, a man acquiring not merely visions of grandeur but delusions of holiness approaching divinity, to the asylum at Longue Pointe. Riel languished there, and in the comparable institution at Beauport, almost continuously from 1875 to 1878, when he vanished into the United States, well supplied (it was said by Macdonald's critics) with funds by the party in power for the purchase of 'good riddance'.

Macdonald no doubt thought himself well rid of an embarrassing personage, and an unpredictable one. Had the government publicly befriended Riel, Ontario would have been down on the Prime Minister like a ton of bricks. Had it sought to punish him, Quebec would have risen to Riel's defence. At no time had he been tried, or even charged and arrested, for Scott's murder. Yet in a sense he might have been regarded as a fugitive from justice. In the government view he was far better off south of the border, quietly teaching school in Montana, where he had taken a Métis bride.

In 1884, a delegation of former Métis supporters sought Riel out in Montana (by this time he had become an American citizen), and persuaded him, perhaps with difficulty, to recross the border and become the leader of a movement aiming at rebellion against the government in Ottawa, this time from a base on the Saskatchewan River, whither the main body of Métis had 'retreated' before the advancing steel and the influx of English-speaking farmer-settlers, mainly from Ontario. Riel arrived in Saskatchewan in July of that year – and the beginnings of the North West Rebellion were afoot.

The Rebellion was quickly quelled by a force rapidly transferred from the east, including a Quebec battalion that played a notable role in subduing the rising, thanks to the efficient co-operation of Van Horne and the still incomplete C.P.R. The troops travelled by flatcar across the regions where steel already had been laid, disembarked at the end of the steel, and marched (or were transported by barge) to the next point of railway construction. In the space of four days' travel the militia units reached Winnipeg from Ottawa. The main body pushed on to Qu'Appelle, and the ultimate collision between troops and Métis occurred at Batoche in May 1884. On May 15 Riel, by this time a man obviously deranged, gave himself up to two of General Middleton's scouts under promise of a 'fair review' of his case before the laying of any charges. So began one of Canada's great *causes célèbres*, which was to have tremendous impact on French-English relations in Canada for years to come. It is against this background, almost two thousand miles from Montreal, that its impact on the city and its people must be

pictured. Not only would it enrage the French-speaking population: it would change the whole context of French-speaking and English-speaking political alignments in the two central provinces, and become the first of many scars Canada itself was to suffer in the days ahead.

Riel was taken to Regina for trial on the charge of treason to Canada by fomenting and leading rebellion. He appeared late in July before a stipendiary magistrate named Richardson and an English-speaking jury of six men. From Montreal came a defence committee consisting of four eminent barristers, François Lemieux, Charles Fitzpatrick, J. N. Johnstone, and J. N. Greenshields – by no means counsel who could be termed 'factionally French-speaking'. The Crown confronted this array with a quintette of equally eminent lawyers, mainly from Ontario, of whom only one was of French origin. Defence attorneys pleaded Riel's American citizenship as proof that he could not have committed treason against Canada. Failing in this, they altered their plea to a claim of insanity. The accused gave his counsel no help whatever, denying his own lawyers' carefully constructed case, and making incoherent spontaneous speeches from the dock pleading his own 'righteous mission', which obviously were those of a deranged man. (In the jurors' absence he actually sprinkled holy water on their empty seats.) He was sentenced to hang on September 18. The jurors recommended clemency. Richardson ignored their 'rider'. Three brief reprieves followed. On November 16, 1885, Louis Riel was hanged by the neck on the gallows of Regina. In the words of one gloating Toronto Orangeman, 'He was found guilty of treason – but hanged for the murder of Scott.' That day a torch was set alight in Montreal which would not burn itself out for long years to come.

During the weeks before the hanging, controversy had become increasingly bitter. In the hysteria of the hour, Canada was in grave danger of coming to the end of a journey it had barely begun. Anti-French feeling ran as high in Toronto as anti-Ontario (not anti-English) feeling did in Montreal. The Toronto attitude is best illustrated by quoting an editorial from that city's *Evening News*, bearing in mind that plain, often brutal, speech often was the editorial habit of the times:

> Ontario is proud of being loyal to England. Quebec is proud of being loyal to sixteenth-century France. Ontario pays about three-fifths of Canada's taxes, fights all the battles of provincial rights, sends nine-tenths of the soldiers to fight the rebels, and gets sat on by Quebec for her pains. Quebec, since the time of Intendant Bigot, has been extravagant, corrupt and venal, whenever she could with other people's money, and has done nothing for herself or for progress with her own earnings. Quebec now gets the pie. Ontario gets

> the mush, and pays the piper for the Bleu Carnival. . . .
>
> If we in Canada are to be confronted with a solid French vote, we must have a solid English vote. If Quebec is always to pose as a beggar in the Dominion soup kitchen she must be disfranchised as a vagrant. If she is to be a traitor in our wars, a thief in our treasury, a conspirator in our Canadian household, she had better go out. She is no use in Confederation. Her representatives are a weakness in Parliament, her cities would be nothing but for the English-speaking people, and to-day Montreal would be as dead as the city of Quebec but for the Anglo-Saxons, who are persecuted and kept down by the ignorant French. . . . We are sick of the French Canadians with their patriotic blabber and their conspiracies against the treasury and the peace of what without them might be a united Canada. . . . With Quebec holding the balance of power Canada isn't safe a moment. The constitution, or the British North America Act which is our alleged constitution, must be altered so as to deprive these venal politicians of their powers or else Confederation will have to go. As far as we are concerned, and we are as much concerned for the good of Canada as anyone else, Quebec could go out of the Confederation to-morrow and we would not shed a tear except for joy. If Ontario were a trifle more loyal to herself she would not stand Quebec's monkey business another minute.

But if Toronto was out for blood, as the *Evening News* editorial, which was echoed in other quarters, indubitably implies, Montreal's non-French community by no means shared the attitude of the Ontario capital. Even in criticism, its speech was far more moderate in tone.

The Montreal *Herald*, for one, supported the French-Canadian position that Riel should not be hanged. On November 10, 1885, it pointed out that the jury had found Riel guilty, but had recommended mercy. The *Herald* protested that the presiding judge, Richardson, had taken no notice of the jury's recommendation when it returned a verdict of guilty.

> Outside Quebec, there is little or no sympathy with Riel [said the *Herald*]. If he had been tried for thefts, pillaging, etc., (these vulgar crimes), it would have been impossible to have made him a hero . . . as the Métis chief. Patriotism and race could not have been appealed to on his behalf. For the crimes for which he might have been rightfully tried, he could have been hanged and safely deposited out of sight . . . with no halo of martyrdom. But it was as 'Métis chief' that the government chose to try him. . . . Both Liberals and Conservatives took up the cause of Riel in Quebec. . . .

The *Herald* went on to recall that in England political crimes had not been punished with death for the last half century and pointed out that

pictured. Not only would it enrage the French-speaking population: it would change the whole context of French-speaking and English-speaking political alignments in the two central provinces, and become the first of many scars Canada itself was to suffer in the days ahead.

Riel was taken to Regina for trial on the charge of treason to Canada by fomenting and leading rebellion. He appeared late in July before a stipendiary magistrate named Richardson and an English-speaking jury of six men. From Montreal came a defence committee consisting of four eminent barristers, François Lemieux, Charles Fitzpatrick, J. N. Johnstone, and J. N. Greenshields – by no means counsel who could be termed 'factionally French-speaking'. The Crown confronted this array with a quintette of equally eminent lawyers, mainly from Ontario, of whom only one was of French origin. Defence attorneys pleaded Riel's American citizenship as proof that he could not have committed treason against Canada. Failing in this, they altered their plea to a claim of insanity. The accused gave his counsel no help whatever, denying his own lawyers' carefully constructed case, and making incoherent spontaneous speeches from the dock pleading his own 'righteous mission', which obviously were those of a deranged man. (In the jurors' absence he actually sprinkled holy water on their empty seats.) He was sentenced to hang on September 18. The jurors recommended clemency. Richardson ignored their 'rider'. Three brief reprieves followed. On November 16, 1885, Louis Riel was hanged by the neck on the gallows of Regina. In the words of one gloating Toronto Orangeman, 'He was found guilty of treason – but hanged for the murder of Scott.' That day a torch was set alight in Montreal which would not burn itself out for long years to come.

During the weeks before the hanging, controversy had become increasingly bitter. In the hysteria of the hour, Canada was in grave danger of coming to the end of a journey it had barely begun. Anti-French feeling ran as high in Toronto as anti-Ontario (not anti-English) feeling did in Montreal. The Toronto attitude is best illustrated by quoting an editorial from that city's *Evening News*, bearing in mind that plain, often brutal, speech often was the editorial habit of the times:

> Ontario is proud of being loyal to England. Quebec is proud of being loyal to sixteenth-century France. Ontario pays about three-fifths of Canada's taxes, fights all the battles of provincial rights, sends nine-tenths of the soldiers to fight the rebels, and gets sat on by Quebec for her pains. Quebec, since the time of Intendant Bigot, has been extravagant, corrupt and venal, whenever she could with other people's money, and has done nothing for herself or for progress with her own earnings. Quebec now gets the pie. Ontario gets

> the mush, and pays the piper for the Bleu Carnival. . . .
>
> If we in Canada are to be confronted with a solid French vote, we must have a solid English vote. If Quebec is always to pose as a beggar in the Dominion soup kitchen she must be disfranchised as a vagrant. If she is to be a traitor in our wars, a thief in our treasury, a conspirator in our Canadian household, she had better go out. She is no use in Confederation. Her representatives are a weakness in Parliament, her cities would be nothing but for the English-speaking people, and to-day Montreal would be as dead as the city of Quebec but for the Anglo-Saxons, who are persecuted and kept down by the ignorant French. . . . We are sick of the French Canadians with their patriotic blabber and their conspiracies against the treasury and the peace of what without them might be a united Canada. . . . With Quebec holding the balance of power Canada isn't safe a moment. The constitution, or the British North America Act which is our alleged constitution, must be altered so as to deprive these venal politicians of their powers or else Confederation will have to go. As far as we are concerned, and we are as much concerned for the good of Canada as anyone else, Quebec could go out of the Confederation to-morrow and we would not shed a tear except for joy. If Ontario were a trifle more loyal to herself she would not stand Quebec's monkey business another minute.

But if Toronto was out for blood, as the *Evening News* editorial, which was echoed in other quarters, indubitably implies, Montreal's non-French community by no means shared the attitude of the Ontario capital. Even in criticism, its speech was far more moderate in tone.

The Montreal *Herald*, for one, supported the French-Canadian position that Riel should not be hanged. On November 10, 1885, it pointed out that the jury had found Riel guilty, but had recommended mercy. The *Herald* protested that the presiding judge, Richardson, had taken no notice of the jury's recommendation when it returned a verdict of guilty.

> Outside Quebec, there is little or no sympathy with Riel [said the *Herald*]. If he had been tried for thefts, pillaging, etc., (these vulgar crimes), it would have been impossible to have made him a hero . . . as the Métis chief. Patriotism and race could not have been appealed to on his behalf. For the crimes for which he might have been rightfully tried, he could have been hanged and safely deposited out of sight . . . with no halo of martyrdom. But it was as 'Métis chief' that the government chose to try him. . . . Both Liberals and Conservatives took up the cause of Riel in Quebec. . . .

The *Herald* went on to recall that in England political crimes had not been punished with death for the last half century and pointed out that

the Irish rebels, D'Arcy McGee, T. W. Anglin, and Charles Gavin Duffy, on leaving Ireland under somewhat similar conditions, 'found favour and prominence in the colonies'.

The Montreal *Post*, described by *La Minerve* as 'the organ of our fellow Irish citizens', carried an article very strongly in favour of Riel, prior to the actual execution. 'Our confrère has demanded, like us, the exercise of royal clemency,' said *La Minerve* of November 10.

The *Daily Star* of Montreal wrote on November 14: 'That a political earthquake is at hand in this country, few will doubt. It is the intention, it seems, of the majority of the French-Canadian Conservative members of the House to go into opposition if the Government allows Riel to hang.' The underlying tone of the *Star* editorial was that the administration in Ottawa was on the verge of committing not only an act of injustice but a grave political blunder.

La Minerve, on November 12, 1885, claimed that

> the position taken by the province of Quebec was more honorable than that chosen by Ontario and some other provinces where the French element is in the minority. The French-Canadian element has the pretension of being a respectable, useful and peaceful element in Confederation. They have never treated the question of Riel from a narrow or false point of view. They have lent a strong hand in the suppression of the [North West] revolt and the punishment of the guilty. Their loyalty is above reproach. But when one has seen an exalted majority displacing the question by making the gallows a demonstration of humiliation against our race, one has reason to be stirred, and they have, in dignified terms, called upon the generosity of the majority.

On November 13, sixteen French-speaking Conservative members from Quebec sent a telegram to Macdonald protesting that the execution 'would be an act of cruelty for which they would not assume responsibility'. J. J. Curran, M.P. for Montreal Centre, was asked to join with them, but refused. A deputation of prominent Irish Catholics was appointed at a meeting on the Saturday night prior to Riel's execution to wait on Curran and request him to use his influence with the government 'even at the 11th hour, in behalf of Riel'. Curran apparently continued to refuse, with the result that the *Daily Star* of November 16 reported that the 'name of Charles Fitzpatrick, Riel's counsel, is already mentioned as opponent in Montreal Centre against Curran, on account of his [Curran's] refusal to take part in the movement of French-Canadian Conservatives.'

On the day of the execution, the Montreal *Herald* said: 'Never since Admiral Byng was shot to save a ministry has a prisoner's life or death

so absolutely depended on the relative support or opposition that his death would bring to the Cabinet.' *La Minerve* said,

> We have the sincerest conviction that the anguish will be long and increasing for those who now have an hour of triumph. They have placed cruelty in the place of justice; they have wished revenge; they have it. From this day, political conditions are changed. For a quarter of a century, the Conservative Party of Lower Canada has been dragging in its wake the disjointed fragments of the hypocritical coteries who have wormed themselves into the Upper Conservative party. By not choosing our companions well, we have admitted into our house a brood who, having grown strong in its shelter, now drive us from the roof [a reference obviously to the continuing Quebec ministers in Macdonald's cabinet].

La Patrie, the French Liberal newspaper, cried: 'We have been betrayed by our fellow countrymen. Three of our ministers [Chapleau, Langevin, and Caron] have sold their race. Riel was only the means; in striking him, they wished to strike us. To us it belongs to seek in our patriotism a new force to reconstitute our race.' On November 17, *La Patrie* stated, 'The crime is completed. Sir John has had Riel hanged . . . Quebec is in sorrow. The contact with Orangeism has hardened to the point of being insensible to any good emotion, even that of pity, the three men we have sent to Ottawa to represent [Quebec in the Macdonald cabinet].'

The Montreal City Council held a meeting on November 16 to protest the execution, and the tricolour was at half-mast 'for the death of an enemy of Canada', as the Montreal *Star* of November 17 put it. Of the twenty-two councillors present at the special meeting, eight were non-French. The resolution attacking the government was proposed by councillor Major Beaugrand, seconded by Donovan, and carried. Four non-French members voted against the resolution condemning the government. But voting for it were Donovan, Gray, and Mount. After the council meeting, the huge crowd at the City Hall was addressed by several hitherto Conservative M.P.s who said, 'Hereafter all distinction between Rouge and Bleu must disappear.'

The Toronto *Evening News* article quoted earlier was the subject of protests in Parliament. More important, it inflamed feeling in Montreal, by no means confined to the French-speaking or Catholic population. The French-language press, though bitter over the outcome, was far more moderate in tone than the English-language papers of Toronto, possibly in view of the fact that Riel's old friend, protector, and defender, the former Bishop at St. Boniface and more recently the west's archbishop, now condemned his former protégé as a 'miserable madman

and a fanatic', a stand in which Archbishop Taché was joined by other members of the hierarchy in the province of Quebec. Montreal's papers chose rather to put the onus on the concurring French-speaking ministers.

That the Crown hanged a madman, who today would have been adjudged unfit to stand trial, is borne out by the report of Dr. Jukes of the North West Mounted Police, who wrote in his official report at the time of the trial: 'That Riel differs systematically from the large majority of mankind in the views he entertains respecting certain questions relating to religious subjects, or rather to certain spiritual phenomena such as Inspiration and Prophetic Vision in relation thereto must be admitted; on these subjects he cherishes illusions or hallucinations which vary under varying physical and mental conditions.' But the police doctor nevertheless then went on to testify that the prisoner's hallucinations 'do not properly constitute insanity'.

But neither Toronto nor Montreal was really concerned with the rebel leader's sanity. The former was out for blood, in revenge for the death of the Orangeman, Scott. Montreal, on the other hand, saw Macdonald's refusal to intervene as nothing short of deliberate 'murder by government', and as aimed at French-speaking Canada – an emotional rather than a rational conclusion.

Four days after the hanging what may still stand as the greatest mass protest meeting ever held in the metropolis – certainly the greatest ever held outdoors in the cold late-autumn weather – was staged on the Champ de Mars. French-speaking Bleu and Rouge buried their differences in common cause of protest against the 'legalized murder' of the man whose half-breed beginnings had long since been forgotten. Politics, too, was forgotten. In the words of *La Presse*, 'There are no more Conservatives and Liberals. . . . There are only PATRIOTS AND TRAITORS' (the capital letters are the newspaper's). More than forty thousand Montrealers braved the November cold to hear speeches by Honoré Mercier (who within two years would take office as the province's premier), the ultramontane Bleu and hitherto pro-Macdonald Senator F. X. A. Trudel, and Wilfrid Laurier, who had been elected to Ottawa in 1874 and had held cabinet rank briefly during the closing days of the Mackenzie régime. Many English and Irish Montrealers were present among the protesters.

Macdonald's continuing French-speaking ministers, Langevin, Chapleau, and Caron, who had carefully abstained from intervening in Riel's behalf, were being hanged in effigy from one end of the province to the other.

French Canada's views were perhaps best expressed in Mercier's

words: 'Riel, our brother, is dead, victim of his devotion to the cause of the Métis . . . victim of fanaticism and treason . . . of the treason of three of our people who sold their brother to keep their portfolios.' But he urged that 'in all demonstrations nothing be said or done to hurt the feelings of your English fellow countrymen. They are not responsible, far from it; the government is responsible.'

Macdonald nevertheless won the next election. But the Riel affair had changed the politics of Canada's two central provinces. Conservative Montreal and the rural areas surrounding it now began slowly to turn from the Conservative Bleus to the Liberal Rouges. Hitherto preponderantly Grit Ontario began its switch to the Tory banner. Long years passed before the deep emotions stirred by the Riel affair – fundamentally an issue that made no sense of any kind, a rebellion led by a madman, whose importance had been blown up out of all proportions and was seriously mismanaged by the country's government – would die out.

Of such materials are deep cleavages between peoples made. Ottawa's great blunder lay in bringing Riel to trial at all, a move that was clearly made to appease Orange Ontario. To put a lunatic on the gallows-trap was compounding lunacy.

The events of those tragic years, the depth of feeling they aroused among Montreal's French-speaking people (who, as noted, were not lacking the sympathy of many of their English-speaking neighbours), were not forgotten through long decades to come.

Yet what did the average citizen of Montreal know of actual conditions in the west? Little, if anything. What did he really know about Riel? Again, almost nothing. What crimes he had committed in the name of his people might as easily have been carried out by another Métis of Scottish-Indian extraction. By no means all the rebels of the west were French Métis – and Riel was not a French Canadian in the true sense of the term. Perhaps as good an example of mass hysteria as can be found in this connection is Laurier's speech to the wild and angry audience on Montreal's Champ de Mars – the speech of a man again ready, while caught up in the moment's hysteria, to forsake Confederation. Yet, soon after, Laurier was again pleading in Parliament the cause of comity and moderation in a country where two great ethnic groups had no choice but to find ways to live in toleration and harmony.

So terminated one of the tragic hours of Canada's and Montreal's history. Such is the stuff of which history so often is manufactured – tragedy born of a series of stupid blunders by a government, its police, and its courts in what was still almost wilderness country; tragedy born of religious and ethnic bigotry. That was the impact of the Riel affair on Canada and especially on Montreal.

The effect of the hanging of Louis Riel on what may be termed the outlook of Montrealers, especially *vis-à-vis* the city of which they constantly thought (with some justice) as 'Orange Toronto' (whereas Toronto had come to regard itself as 'loyal' and Montreal as 'disaffected'), illustrates the grave oversimplifications to which people everywhere become addicted in moments of crisis, real or manufactured. Of infinitely greater *real* impact on the city's thought-processes and attitudes had been an event which had struck into the heart of every real Montrealer – the stupid, bigot-blinded, and cold-blooded slaughter in 1868 on an Ottawa street of the brilliant, still young at forty-three, Irish-born but deeply Canadian D'Arcy McGee. Of all the founding fathers he had been the one who at Charlottetown and Quebec had become almost the Number One English-speaking spokesman for Confederation of the Canadian colonies. His election to Canada's first Parliament from a Montreal riding, where he had fought the handful of Fenian supporters tooth and claw, yet with a devil-may-care kind of joy and love of battle, had endeared him to a great majority of the community. His refusal of a seat in Macdonald's first cabinet, in the belief that he could serve the cause of unity better as a private member than as a direct cabinet-serving Macdonaldite, was in itself a clue to the mercurial temperament of this brilliant Irishman, beside whose love of Canada the prejudiced and semi-deranged outlook of a Riel was almost that of a know-nothing, elevated to unmerited status by events, prejudice, and hysteria, no matter the rank injustice of the outcome.

April 7, 1868. After a long and tiring debate in the House, arising from the determination of Joseph Howe and his sixteen Nova Scotia followers to secede from Confederation almost before its swaddling clothes had been unpinned, the Prime Minister had returned to his Ottawa home to take his ease and eat a late supper from a tray in his wife's sitting room. Came a knock on the door. Macdonald flung open a window and called down, 'Is anything the matter?'

An awed and terrified voice below replied, 'McGee is murdered, lying in the street, shot through the head.'

The Prime Minister roused a neighbour. Together they drove post-haste into the city. There, near the corner of Sparks Street and Metcalfe, lay the body of the slaughtered man, surrounded by a small group of people – a doctor, his landlady, a policeman, printers from the nearby Ottawa *Times*. Still clamped between the dead legislator's teeth was the butt of a half-smoked cigar; beside him, in the gutter, his hat. He had been slain in cold blood by a Fenian sympathizer named Whelan. The Prime Minister of Canada helped carry the remains of D'Arcy McGee into the house. Next day, in the Commons, he was to propose and

secure passage of an annuity for the patriot's widow and allowances for his children's education, for McGee had never been a man to give a moment's thought to money.

Three days later, McGee was given a state funeral, greater even than Cartier's would be, in his beloved Montreal. In addition to the great roles he had played in the politics of Lower Canada and the creation of Confederation, he had been the binding force which had held the great majority of the city's Irish population to the side of the Confederation – no easy achievement, considering Ireland's natural revulsion from things British, which had indeed been McGee's own feeling before emigrating to Canada.

On the day of his death, McGee had spoken in the House, leading for the Government in a debate on the Nova Scotia question. His words, aimed towards Joseph Howe's secessionist movement, might well be spoken again in another context in 1969:

> Confederation is not to be consolidated by any temporary conciliating concessions to evanescent popular prejudice – not by any momentary humouring in this direction or in that of some particular local or sectional phase of public opinion, but by our constant, earnest and unremitting care of the commercial welfare and progress of the Province . . . and besides this, we need above everything else the healing influence of time, of great importance in the work of consolidating the Confederation of these Provinces. Time will heal all existing irritations. Time will mellow and refine all points of contrast that seem so harsh today. Time will come to the aid of the pervading principles of impartial justice which happily permeate the whole land. Time will show us the Constitution of this Dominion as much cherished in the hearts of the people of all its Provinces as is the British Constitution itself.
>
> Time has already brought with it certain healing operation and there is no question raised now of the advantages which the Union has conferred. There is no question raised now because there has been no consequent injustice. The incorporated people have found that there is no desire to rob them of their liberties and no disposition to treat them with unfairness.
>
> They see what time shows them – that the Union was effected for their advantage as well as that of their neighbours, and they are satisfied because they find it working for both. Our friends need have no fear but that the Confederation will ever be administered with serene and even justice. To its whole history from its earliest inception on to its final triumphant consummation, no stigma can be attached, no stain attributed. Its single aim from the beginning has been to consolidate the extent of British North America with the

> utmost regard to the independent powers and privileges of each Province, and I – who have been and who am still its warm and earnest advocate, speak here not as the representative of any race, of any province, but as thoroughly and emphatically a Canadian, ready and bound to recognize the claims, if any, of my fellow Canadians from the farthest east to the farthest west – equally as those of my nearest neighbour.

So spoke Montreal's first great English-speaking Confederation spokesman on the day of his senseless assassination. An hour later he would stroll light-heartedly a few short blocks, to his death.

Such were the trials of founding a country and building a great city, still in its infancy as the metropolis it would become. Such events as those discussed here have deep emotional effects on communal thought and attitudes. They create community viewpoints and outlooks. No doubt the assassination of McGee and the hanging of Riel helped form what may be called the 'Montreal outlook' during the early years of Confederation, to which these three immediate chapters have been devoted. But communities are people. What of the *people* of Montreal in these first two decades of Confederation? Where did they live? How many of them were there? What did they do – at work and afterwards?

Montreal in 1867 was a community approximately 100,000 in population, bounded on the west by the present Atwater Avenue and on the east by the line where Desery Street runs north and south – a lineal distance just short of six miles. The north bank of the river and its growing line of docks established the southern boundary, and the northern limits were not quite four miles away, at Mount Royal Avenue. These were the boundaries in 1874 when Quebec issued an amended charter to recognize the community officially as 'The City of Montreal', a matter of twenty-four square miles of territory. Whether by design or by chance, the boundaries took in what may still be fairly called the community's two greatest assets – a waterfront which has made Montreal second only to New York as a seaport, and Mount Royal itself, which the city fathers had the good sense to expropriate in 1872 as a natural park in perpetuity, along with the great playing-grounds called Fletcher's Field, which lies at the foot of the mountain's eastern slope, and reaches north to Mount Royal Avenue. Few, if any, cities of its size to this day can boast either the number or beauty of Montreal's parks and playing fields. When the 128 acres of St. Helen's Island were added in 1874, Montreal could be described as a city almost in a class by itself, in terms of the natural beauties claimed by and for its people, for all time to come.

Much has been made of the 'fact', then and now, of Montreal's being

two cities in one, with St. Lawrence Boulevard often drawn as an almost arbitrary boundary line or wall between two separate and distinct enclaves, obviously described as 'French' (all terrain lying to the east of the Boulevard that runs due north from the port through the heart of the city and on through its most recent extensions) and 'English', the area west of this line. The statement, in 1874 as today, is a generalization containing just enough truth to be widely accepted, but far from enough to be called 'fact'. In later years, indeed, the area surrounding the lower section of what English-speaking Montrealers always referred to as 'the Main' (St. Lawrence Boulevard) became more an island in the city's heart, the home of a tawdry night-life of brothels, dubious cabarets, off-hours drinking dives, and gaming houses, as well as the warren and headquarters of its criminal element, a condition that obtained far into the twentieth century and for a time gave Montreal the unenviable reputation of an 'open' town.

Above Sherbrooke, the streets running off the Main soon became the principal abiding place of ethnic groups that were neither French nor English in extraction and, in somewhat later years, the centre of the needle and garment trades. St. Lawrence Boulevard may have repeatedly been described as the line of demarcation, but it was never that in any rigid sense of the term. Were it so, how would one explain the wide use of the mountain, well to the west, by the French-speaking population, or of Fletcher's Field as the city's greatest playground for youngsters of all classes, origins, and languages?

Even in terms of religious and educational establishments the division is artificial. The great college founded by the Gentlemen of St. Sulpice is well out into the so-called 'English west end'. In 1868 the Grey Nuns moved from the site of the original Charon Frères institution in the harbour area to a new home at Dorchester and Guy streets, where they remain to this day, carrying on precisely the same type of charitable work as in the past. The Mother House of the Marguerite Bourgeoys congregation, built at the turn of the century, is in what is now the autonomous city of Westmount (entirely surrounded by Montreal and generally regarded as the 'wealthy Anglo enclave' – another myth to which all manner of writers and speakers have contributed). It was the principal home for the higher education of Catholic women until the present Institut Pédagogique was built even deeper and higher in 'English Westmount'. The city's great Basilica of Mary, Queen of the World – a replica of St. Peter's in Vatican City – occupies a corner of Dominion Square at what is now Dorchester Boulevard, surrounded by the skyscrapers of the great 'English corporations' – and, incidentally, is perhaps the city's most beautiful edifice, certainly so by comparison

with its high-rise neighbours. Its construction was begun early in the post-Confederation years. So much, then, for persistent mythology.

Strange myths emerge in any city whose essence is its ethnic duality. By the very nature of its beginnings and development such myths were bound to grow in Montreal and, if only by repetition, come to be largely accepted as axiomatic. None has ever had stronger acceptance than the one that says that the commerce and wealth of the community, as early as 1867 and through the 1870s, were 'owned' by 'the English' (who in the upper financial brackets were still primarily Scottish), whereas 'the French' did the work. But certainly there were many wealthy French-speaking families, whose menfolk were engaged in commerce, the law, politics, medicine, and, at home, in 'gracious living'. They may not have mingled much with comparable families in the English-speaking community, nor have promoted social occasions with as much pomp and circumstance as did the latter's 'upper crust', particularly before 1869, when the departure of the British garrison-troops began. But, one repeats, great social occasions are not the stuff of which a community is made, nor do such occasions touch the lives of a city's people.

The 'average' Montrealer of the early post-Confederation years, French- or English-speaking, worked hard for his daily bread and received precious little in exchange for his long working hours through a six-day week. At the end of the day he trudged homeward, for many months through deep snow or on icy streets. Those who could afford the luxury rode the horse-cars, each equipped with its pot-bellied stove (stoked with wood by the conductor), which ambled westward as far as the corner of Guy and St. Catherine streets, north as far as the lower side of Fletcher's Field and, a little later, through a variety of north-south thoroughfares as far as Mount Royal Avenue. They were, in effect, buses that travelled on runners in winter and converted to wheels when the spring thaw came.

'Home' to the average family was likely to be one floor of a house of a design peculiar to Montreal and other major communities of the province. It was approached from the street level by a straight or sometimes elliptical outdoor stairway, of twenty steps or more, which led to a living-level approximately twenty feet higher up. At ground level would be a 'semi-basement flat' and a third family lived on the top floor, reached through a porchway shared with the mid-level occupants, but with a separate inner door. Street after street was filled with row on row of such dwellings. There was never any special name for this type of house, but early Montreal abounded in them, and in many back-streets, especially in poorer districts, they are still to be seen. Where they remain, however, the 'indoor conveniences' (at least as to heating

and sanitation) are vastly improved over those of the period we are discussing.

Home life was to a large degree centred in the family and, certainly so far as the French-speaking population was concerned, in the activities of the nearest parish church. But the town abounded, especially in the winter months, in sports activities and clubs that were open in membership to almost anyone who could pay the low entrance fees. Snowshoe clubs existed in every residential area, some catering to the well-to-do, but a majority to the average citizen blessed with rugged health and strong legs. From snowshoeing grew the first almost casually organized winter carnivals. In the beginning these consisted of snowshoe races, curling on the ice on the river, tobogganing. (In the 1870s, the slopes of Peel and Windsor streets were closed to traffic after dark for the safety of the 'sliders'. Later they moved to the mountain, as the number of tobogganers grew to huge proportions.) Hockey was allegedly originated by young officers of the garrison who played with a rubber ball and field-hockey sticks. Soon it became an organized sport, the rules of which in their original form are said to have been written by a trio of McGill University students whose names remain unknown – the origin of what soon came to be Canada's national sport.

Finally, in 1883, came the grandiose idea that was to make Montreal's the carnival of carnivals – the first Ice Palace. Its site was Dominion Square, formerly the Catholic cemetery, which the city had acquired some ten years earlier. The palace was a huge affair, built of thousands of blocks of ice cut from the river. The result was a castle as grand in appearance as any built of stone in the Old World, a palace that glistened in the lights of evening and indeed formed the focal point not only of the carnival but of the fun-of-the-city for people of every age and language. This was especially so on the nights when it was 'stormed' by massed snowshoe clubs and defended by 'the volunteers', each armed with every imaginable kind of pyrotechnic 'bomb'. These were glorious nights, these long nights of winter when Montreal was at its happy best. Here was fun in which all could engage. Here in the carnival and at the ice palace was an occasion when, no matter what has been written or said of divisions among the people of this great city, all were as one in their shared enjoyment.

That divisions *did* exist is patent. In the main, the Irish went to live in what came to be called Griffintown, in the southwest corner of the city. French- and English-speaking people of the working classes tended to live in their own separate areas. The well-to-do of both major ethnic groups built their mansions in what would soon come to be known as the 'uptown' area, with a few on the lower slopes of Mount Royal. But

to imply that there was little if any intermingling is to greatly oversimplify both social and working conditions.

Banking, for example, rapidly became an occupation for both French- and English-speaking financiers and their employees. The retail trade was mainly in the hands of the French; wholesaling was divided between Scottish and French elements; manufacturing, which was growing apace, was largely, but by no means entirely, in the hands of English-speaking owners. (One suspects that the merchant class was perhaps more bilingual in 1867 than in 1967.) Most of the city's contractors were of Irish extraction and tended to employ workers from their own element.

Of manufacturing it can be said that at approximately the time of Confederation boot-and-shoe factories to the number of twenty had already been established. Some owners were French, others English. Between them they employed no fewer than 15,000 persons. As the C.P.R. began to become a reality, it gave jobs to another 6,000 in its shops alone. Sugar refineries and other mills were rapidly coming into being. In the early years of Confederation, when the Lachine Canal was deepened and widened, a variety of industries were established on the banks of the various basins above the locks at the harbour's head. That the harbour already had become a great transshipment port, especially with the coming of the railways, is established by one simple figure: on May 12, 1871, twenty-one ocean-going steamships and a variety of sailing vessels, to a total of seventy, were berthed alongside its wharves. These were all signs of a growing city and, in most respects, of a contented and harmoniously integrated population.

It was by no means a time of easy economic life for the city's inhabitants however. Shortly before Confederation, for example, the United States had renounced its Reciprocity Treaty with Canada. During the lifetime of this agreement, Montreal had become a flour-milling centre, using home-grown and freely imported wheat for processing and export. The cancellation of reciprocity went far towards causing a serious setback in the city's prosperity, creating unemployment in the town as a result of the cessation of the inflow of American grain for milling and export, and simultaneously making hard times for the habitants in the outlying farming regions, who had become major wheat growers. Meanwhile, the price of wheat in the world market fell from $1.75 to 88 cents a bushel between 1867 and 1890, with corresponding impact on flour milling for export to Europe.

Yet the city grew, in part through natural causes, but also by the beginnings of annexation of adjoining communities, the first of which was the town of Hochelaga, abutting on Montreal proper to the east.

It was a flourishing community, well-governed and, for the period, prosperous, to the point that when it joined Montreal by an act of the legislature the annexation was described as 'a marriage of equals'. Four additional towns, towards which the greater city had been gradually reaching out its tentacles, became parts of Montreal proper within the next four years.

In addition to those already discussed, Montreal also passed through other emotional crises, as all growing communities must, but which in Montreal's case may be said to have been accentuated by its own strange amalgam. Not the least of these was what came to be known as the 'Guibord Affair'.

Joseph Guibord, a printer, had not only been a member of the 'anti-clerical' Institut Canadien, but had in fact succeeded young Wilfrid Laurier in the presidency of that body. In later years Guibord had publicly declared himself a 'free thinker' and had been excommunicated as a result. On approaching death, in 1871, he had been denied the last rites of the Church and had subsequently been buried in 'unconsecrated ground' – the Protestant cemetery. A fiery young lawyer, Roger Laflamme, who was to reach great heights at the bar, took up the case in the widow's behalf.

Winning in the lower courts, Laflamme was taken to appeal by Bishop Bourget, lost the next round, and was among the first Canadian attorneys to carry a case to what was then Canada's court of last resort, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in London. Laflamme returned to Canada with a favourable verdict, plus costs of $6,000, assessed against the Parish of Notre Dame. Guibord's body was to be exhumed from the grave in the Protestant cemetery where it had rested for four years, and was to be given full Christian burial by the church to which he had sought to return on his deathbed.

On September 2, 1875, the printer's body was carried to the gates of the Catholic cemetery on the north slope of Mount Royal, only to find them closed against it. The casket was carried back to the near-by Protestant cemetery and re-interred there. Finally, on November 16, no longer able to ignore the orders of the final court of appeal, Bishop Bourget appeared to yield. Guibord's body was again disinterred and carried back to the Catholic cemetery, the funeral journey being made under escort of 1,200 troops supplied at the Bishop's request, for by this time the Catholic community was in turmoil, friend refusing to speak to friend, even families divided on the bitter issue of one man's religious beliefs. This time the cemetery gates stood open and Guibord's fourth and final funeral procession and burial took place.

Two hours later, with a stroke of the pen, the small plot of ground

where Guibord lay was deconsecrated by the Bishop. So ended, in 1875, an incident that through four years had sharply divided not Catholic from Protestant, but Catholic from Catholic. The Bishop, after all, had had the last word and had asserted his authority – a situation almost incomprehensible in today's context of ecumenism and the liberalizing of religion.

But those were days of deep religious conviction and prejudice, none greater than those which ran between extreme Protestantism (as illustrated by the activities of the Orange Order, or at least staunchly bigoted groups within it) and Roman Catholicism. Thus there were, from time to time, sharp clashes between the two, especially when members of the Orange Order from Ontario communities 'invaded' Montreal to join their comparatively few brothers in the city in July 12 celebrations and parades commemorating the Battle of the Boyne. They came in a provocative mood and could be said to have been ready to incite trouble in the streets. It was not hard to find. On July 12, 1878, an occasion when street collisions grew into mob violence, an Orange parader was shot to death during the general disorder, which neither the police nor the military had been able to bring under control.

Such incidents – and they were usually incidents involving the few, not the many – temporarily disturbed the general spirit of an amiable mixed community. They also had a sobering effect and cooled the ardours and emotions of a busy and growing city. This was the city from which more than a hundred young men had marched out in the uniform of the Papal Zouaves in 1868, Europe-bound to fight for the Vatican lands against Garibaldi; the city where Calixa Lavallée composed 'O Canada' in 1880 (the French lyrics by Sir A. B. Routhier came later, and those which English Canadians sing much later still by Recorder Stanley Weir, another Montrealer). It was a city whose lower reaches were subject to heavy floods when ice jammed against the piers of the Victoria Bridge and 'backed' the St. Lawrence into the Lower Town (to the point that on occasion ferries operated from the foot of Beaver Hall Hill through the business district), until warmer weather and explosives moved the great jagged masses of ice which, spring after spring, formed an impenetrable dam from shore to shore. It was the city where McGill University won world-wide renown as an institution of higher learning, under its great principal, Sir William Dawson.

It was, too, a city tortured by such great epidemics as the outbreak of smallpox that struck the community in 1885, bringing riots in its train as citizens fought the compulsory vaccination law, recently introduced, which, however, rapidly brought the epidemic under control. It was becoming a city of macadamized streets, replacing the old muddied

tracks, where bluestone sidewalks lined the main thoroughfares, and electric lights began to glisten on such main arteries as St. James Street, still the centre of the principal business district. It had become a city of almost a quarter-million people, when Maisonneuve's Montreal, in 1892, celebrated its 250th birthday and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Confederation.

19 A Century Ends– Another Begins

In the year Montreal celebrated its 250th birthday and Canada the twenty-fifth anniversary of Confederation a young French-Canadian lawyer, Wilfrid Laurier, became Leader of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons, and the Conservatives took over the reins of government in Quebec. The Mayor of Montreal was the controversial Honourable 'Jimmie' McShane, who would lose the mayoral chair a year later to his rival, Alphonse Desjardins, after a hot legal tussle involving the courts and, finally, an enactment of the legislature. Meanwhile, a tremendous yeast was working within Montreal itself. Through the closing decade of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth century, great changes – improvement in the lot of the city's people and growth of the city itself – would take place.

The early rumbles of discord became more strident with the rise to political prominence of such men as Henri Bourassa, Olivar Asselin, Israel Tarte, and Armand Lavergne. The harsh note grew in volume towards the end of 1899, with, among other nationalist manifestations, the appearance of a new French journal, *Les Débats*, whose masthead shouted, 'Neither sold nor for sale to any political faction.' Its first issue on December 3 described 'the explosion of indignation which arose in

the heart of all nations when they learned of the murderous attempt by England on the Transvaal', and referred to the 'peaceable and honest Boers, caught in ambushes where they must perish eventually by the dum-dum balls'. In the same article, Jules Vernier contemptuously dismissed the French-Canadian heritage from royal France. Speaking of the time when France 'to her misfortune, was governed by kings, when the nobility held the people in the most abject servitude under the reign of Louis XV, the daughter of the butcher Poisson, a prostitute, the mistress of the king of France, more powerful than the Queen, La Pompadour, since it is necessary to call her by name, sold Canada to the English for a mite', Vernier went on to describe how 'our fathers, the ancient colonists, did not wish to submit to this odious sale, where they were sold with their lands as one sells the animals with the farm'. He summarized the history of French Canada, lauding 'our patriots who took up arms once more to snatch some branches of liberty from the English' and finally secured a *modus vivendi* in which 'we, for our part, agreed to submit to our conquerors, though we did not, as far as I know, undertake to love them'. But no love was lost between the Nationalists of Montreal and Quebec and the France whose king had 'betrayed' her sons and daughters on the St. Lawrence.

In his article, Vernier mocked the official dinners and functions at which the *entente* between French and English elements in Montreal was applauded. To the current cliché that 'France has given us our life; but England has given us liberty' Vernier concluded bitterly, 'For them, the English, we are the conquered of Abraham – a nation degenerated, a race inferior.'

A few weeks later, *Les Débats* lashed out again, this time more pointedly at the grievances of Montreal East against the city's more prosperous west end. The journal, which *La Presse* dismissed in five short lines as being 'disloyal', commented sardonically that the people in the east of the city 'take to politics, while the people in the west take jobs; and our politicians, who are cunning, these men of business, make political agitation in the east and jobs in the west'. Asking why it was that despite promises of extension in Montreal East the port of Montreal was always enlarged only in the western part, the editor of *Les Débats* suggested that the solution to such grievances would only come with an 'honest municipal council' which itself could only be acquired by electors who 'refuse to sell themselves'. The yeast was indeed working. But other things were moving too.

At the turn of the century, the port of Montreal handled 46 per cent of the country's exports and 36 per cent of the imports by water. By 1905, the harbour's business had doubled, with wheat the chief com-

modity, but this was supplemented by other farm produce, such as butter, cheese, chickens, cattle, and pigs. Within another five years, in volume of business handled, the port of Montreal was second only to New York in North America. By 1910, the year Montreal gained the 'honest municipal government' so earnestly urged by the fiery young journalists of *Les Débats*, Montreal's port was extended from sixteen to thirty-six miles, to include much of Montreal East, and its jurisdiction was placed under the Montreal Harbour Board.

While young French Canadians thought of the city's division as being between the 'poor' east and the 'wealthy' west, an earnest young English-Canadian manufacturer and conservative in politics, Herbert Ames, thought of the division as 'above' and 'below' the hill, those who lived on or above Dorchester Street and those who lived below. To draw attention to the housing and working conditions of those 'below the hill', Ames undertook a detailed sociological study of the square mile below Dorchester, between Lagauchetière and Centre streets. Ames found English, French, and Irish Canadians almost equally blended in numbers in this area, which also housed some 94 German and Dutch families, 70 Polish and Russian families, 24 Negro families, and 18 Chinese families. His findings were published in booklet form in 1897 under the title *The City Below the Hill.*

In the selected area, Ames found that the average weekly wage per family was $11.00, though in some cases it dropped as low as $1.75. Many lived in 'rear' tenements, some 860 of them hidden away from the streets and accessible only through covered passages or narrow lanes off a main street. Ames considered these rear tenements as 'constructed more with an eye to turning a quick profit for the landlords, than for any comfort to the tenants . . . they were not only bad in themselves, but they took up light, air and space from the houses facing the streets proper . . . and being hidden from the street, they were often allowed to fall into a state of decay that was not fit for human habitation.'

The typical rear tenement was usually an ancient wooden cottage of the rural habitant type or a two-storey building encased in refuse bricks and reached by rickety wooden stairs and gallery. Ames concluded that 'if one wished to find where drunkenness, crime, disease and death, poverty and distress were most evident in Montreal, one need only seek out the rear tenement.' His words were echoed by Henry Vivian, a visiting British Member of Parliament, who remarked that 'unless preparations are constantly made for caring for your population, Montreal will become one of the greatest cesspools of human depravity in the

world. Nothing in East London is worse than some of the conditions which I saw in Montreal yesterday.'

More than half of the inhabitants surveyed by Ames were dependent upon 'that insanitary abomination – the out-of-door pit-in-the-ground privy' which he called a relic of rural conditions. The evil was greatest in the older residential areas where many of the dwellings were erected before the days of proper drainage. In 1896 Ames, who was nicknamed 'Privy-Pit Ames', estimated that Montreal contained nearly 5,800 privies; in 1891 there had been 8,800. He suggested a method of forcing owners to abandon such devices – 'tax the privies $10.00 a year' – and pleaded that 'Montreal enter the twentieth century with this reform an accomplished fact'.

Yet Ames found Montreal not 'densely populated' if compared with Old World standards. In the area examined he found an average of 94 persons per acre, though in some parts of Griffintown there were as many as 173 persons per acre, while between St. Martin and Seigneurs streets he found 955 persons residing in three acres – that is, in an area the size of a large portion of Dominion Square. Some overcrowding in homes was discovered, but Ames estimated it to be not as great as was expected. The typical family amounted to five members and there was no noticeable difference among the three major nationalities in the area. He also discovered that the idea, 'the poorer the family, the larger the number of children', was wrong; in fact the reverse was true.

At the time of Ames's study, the area had 1,442 places of labour employing some 16,237 persons.

Of those employed in the district, 77 per cent were men and 20 per cent were women, while 460 boys and girls were also employed. The women and children were mainly to be found in the bag and nail works, the silk mills, and the canneries. The sugar refinery employed boys; and the rope and paint works hired many boys and girls. Over a hundred women worked at the Montreal Woollen works. Ames concluded that in the employment of women and children Montreal's record was not as bad as that of Britain or France where the proportion was much higher. He had at least exploded the myth of 'poor' French-speaking families in the east end and 'rich' non-French in the west end.

Ames estimated that $5 was the minimum weekly wage that could maintain a family at subsistence level. Yet in the area he investigated he found 888 families earning less than $5. He spoke of these as the 'submerged tenth' of western Montreal – 'Montreal's poor'. Over half of these 'poor' lived in Griffintown or the 'Swamp', the area between Mountain and Lusignan streets, where he found the greatest density of

population. In old Griffintown he found that only a hundred families, or 7 per cent of the area's total, 'enjoyed' incomes exceeding $20 per week, mainly grocers or tavern keepers.

In the 'city below the hill' there were 105 licensed saloons and eighty-seven liquor-selling groceries. Ames found that the poorest areas had the most liquor stores, not counting the number of unlicensed liquor stores, of which he could make no estimate. Nationality played no part in idleness and drinking, he concluded, for he showed that in the Irish section beyond the canal, where the population was similar to that in Griffintown in nationality but enjoyed a 50 per cent better employment situation, there were far fewer liquor stores, only one for every fifty families, while in the poorer sections of Griffintown he found one liquor store to every thirty-three.

The main cause of poverty and idleness was unemployment. Each family in the area had its wage-earner, but few of them could find full-time work. Nearly one wage-earner in four was without steady work. Of the 1,500 families in Griffintown, some 600 had never known steady employment. For literally hundreds of men the year's work program consisted of summer work on the wharves, or at the locks and canal basins, unloading the regular river boats, and what odd jobs they could find during the five winter months. When spring arrived, overdue rent and debt at the corner grocery store had mortgaged the summer's earnings, making savings impossible in such households. Ames found that recent immigration had nothing to do with the poverty of the area, as almost all the householders had been there at least three years, and in most cases were old residents of Montreal.

The poor were not entirely forgotten by Montreal's more prosperous community. The St. Vincent de Paul Societies cared for French Canadians, the House of Industry and such national societies as St. George's and St. Andrew's cared for Protestants. Several Irish associations lent assistance to Hibernians, as did the parish authorities of all denominations. Ames's study had at least refuted the claim that 'the English have the money, the French do the work'. There was plenty of poverty in the English-speaking community.

Compared with other parts of Canada, Montreal's death rate at the turn of the century was high. For the Dominion of Canada in 1893 it was fourteen per thousand per annum, for the province of Quebec it was nineteen per thousand. Montreal's rate was highest of all – twenty-five per thousand. However, even this was an improvement over 1873 when it had been 40 per cent higher.

Above the hill, life presented a much more agreeable picture. Here were the fashionable homes of Montreal's human success stories. At

1181 Mountain Street lived Montreal's poet-doctor, William Henry Drummond, in the residence that had welcomed Confederate President Jefferson Davis and his family in 1867.

At the corner of Côte St. Antoine and Clarke Avenue was the comfortable, orchard-surrounded home of one of the city's oldest inhabitants, Mrs. John Clarke, widow of a man who had been among the hardy Montrealers who had forged the nineteenth-century fur business. Born in Switzerland in 1802 of a well-to-do family, Mrs. Clarke had come to Canada as a girl of seventeen or eighteen; she married the forty-year-old Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and travelled with him to distant parts of British North America, bearing some of her eight children in such primitive and remote posts as Lake Winnipeg, Fort Pelly in Rupert's Land, and Mingan in northern Quebec. At the turn of the century, Mrs. Clarke was ninety-eight and still possessed clear memories of her arrival in Montreal in the early 1820s; it had taken her eight days to make the trip from Quebec to Montreal, where she put up at the old Rasco's Hotel on St. Paul Street and enjoyed the sight of Notre Dame Street where the barracks were located and which at that time was the fashionable walk for the military often accompanied by Canadienne beauties. McGill Street was then an orchard of green apple trees and Craig Street was a little stream called Canai, crossed in scows pushed by long sticks.

Mrs. Clarke's daughter, Miss Adele Clarke, wrote plaintively at the turn of the century that with the 'departure of the Garrison, the character of Montreal society life entirely changed. The people about whom I have written have been replaced by another society which has gradually developed, but on totally different lines, not united as in the old days, but broken into numerous sets, who scarcely meet each other, and are occupied with thoughts and avocations quite dis-similar.'

Richard Helmsley described some of those who made up Montreal society at the turn of the century. In his jeweller's shop on St. Joseph's Street, he served rich and poor with equal concern. When he began to sell the cheaper, machine-made, American Waltham watch, the largest of the Swiss watch importers threatened to put him out of business by opening up a shop next to his and selling Swiss watches at cost. Helmsley called their bluff, stating he would be in business long after they were ploughed under, and his prediction proved true, largely because of adroit business methods. Helmsley was one of the great Montreal 'characters' of his time. One story goes that three young ladies once came into his store, all dressed in fur-trimmed coats, and asked to see gold rings. Helmsley waited on them with care, though they bought nothing, and then he noticed that one of the rings was missing. Un-

daunted, he walked around the counter to see if the ring was lodged in the trimming. Several customers who were waiting to be served immediately reprimanded him, saying that the young ladies were honest, and one man began to stomp to the door declaring he would never come back. The jeweller jumped to the door, locked it, and declared they should all stay and 'see the thing through'. He then went to the oldest girl, his fist clenched, and threatened to smash her face in if she did not spit out the ring. He held up his other hand to receive it, and out it popped.

Helmsley's methods for dealing with labour troubles were no less effective. Finding the eight jewellers whom he employed slipping away early, leaving work half finished, he explained his troubles to his oldest and best workman, asking him if he would let him know his intentions as to his holidays so that he could make arrangements not to disappoint his customers. The workman replied, 'Mr. Helmsley, I shall work or play just when I damn please.' Putting the same question to the other seven workmen, each answered in a similar vein. As it was winter, the jeweller's shop was heated by a pot-bellied stove which at the time was red-hot. Helmsley called to his men, 'Boys, take a good look at this poker,' and, holding it so all could see, he then thrust it into the stove saying, 'If any of you are here when the poker is hot, I will burn a hole in you. Get up to the office and you will be paid. There is room for only one master in this shop.' Off the men galloped. But at seven the next morning the oldest workman was at Helmsley's door, saying he had made a fool of himself and asking for his job back, to which Helmsley replied, 'Never.' On arriving at his store, Helmsley found the other seven in equally penitential mood, asking to be reinstated, to which the jeweller agreed on condition that there would be no more 'foolishness'.

'Above the hill' also lived the patriarch of the Molson family, John Henry Robinson Molson. When J.H.R. died at his Montreal home, 'Piedmont', in 1897, his message to the more than a hundred Molson descendants was a mixture of piety and advice on how to maintain the family wealth. 'Your private life should be pure,' he urged. 'Make no compromise with vice, and be able to say "no" in a firm, manly manner.' He proceeded to warn them: 'Live within your income no matter how small it may be. Permanent wealth is maintained and preserved by vigilance and prudence, and not by speculation.'

The seventy-five or so employees at the Molson brewery at this time received something under a total of $400 in weekly wages, the highest wage going to brewmaster John Hyde whose daily pay was $2.00. For a work-week of sixty to sixty-two hours, the average daily wage in the brewery department was $1.10, while in the bottling department, which

employed women, the pay rate was sixty cents. Perhaps the low wage may have accounted for a certain debonairness with which the bottle-washers treated their task. In John Hyde's day, bottles were delivered to the brewery packed in straw, a favourite nesting place for mice, and it was not uncommon for a customer to discover that the thick green glass bottle which allowed no eye to penetrate its thickness may have been harbouring a foreign body in its ale.

The operations at the brewery in 1897 began at five in the morning when the various quantities and kinds of barley malt, weighed and waiting, together with the 'brewing liquor' – a hard water obtained from the deep well and heated to the required temperature by steam – were placed in the mash tub. The delicate chemical changes during mashing were largely dependent upon correct temperatures being maintained, and the whole day's production could be ruined by the loss or gain of a few degrees. Brewmaster John Hyde's thermometer of 1897 differed little from the one that had been used by John Molson when he had brewed his first beer near St. Mary's Current 111 years before. After four to six hours, the mashing was completed and the malt extract was transferred to the brew kettle. The spent grains were shovelled outside where for the next twenty-four hours farmers came with carts to buy it as cattle feed. The remaining grains then had to be carted away before their fermentation polluted the neighbouring area.

The difficulties of heat control, especially in summer, presented Molson's and other brewers with severe problems. If the temperature of the city water rose beyond fifty degrees, brewing had to be suspended or ice used to cool the water. Great blocks of ice, six by three by two feet, were cut from the St. Lawrence in winter and stored in underground cellars to be used during the summer for cooling.

Molson's brewery at the turn of the century was experiencing keen competition from about twelve other city breweries, indicating the general upsurge of business after the depression of 1879. This was largely the result of the impact of the Canadian Pacific Railway, pushed to its completion – mainly by Montrealers – against great obstacles. In addition to giving back to Montreal its agricultural frontier, the C.P.R. poured into the city new industry in the form of locomotive and machine shops and this injection into the city's heavy industry attracted more industry which not only stemmed what had been a serious exodus of Montrealers southward, but actually attracted new immigrants to the city.

This new immigration wave was partly due to the Laurier administration's policy that it was better to give western land away and even pay settlers to come than to leave the land unsettled. The tide of immigration

that set in again came at first from the American mid-west, then from Britain and Europe. In Montreal it was reflected by a population leap from 267,730 at the turn of the century to 466,197 in 1911, by which time the city had become two-thirds French-speaking and one-third English-speaking.

Many of the new immigrants found jobs at the Montreal sugar refineries, where more than 5,000 men were employed to process three-quarters of the sugar consumed in Canada. Much work was also provided by the Montreal textile mills which controlled three-fifths of the dry-goods trade of the nation. But Montreal's largest single industry was tobacco, whose potentate was an eccentric old bachelor, William Macdonald, who drove to work in his outmoded gig and whose detestation of smoking paralleled John Thomas Molson's early sentiments on drinking. In a temperance lecture in 1860, Molson had prophesied, 'Woe, woe to the drunkard – to the rum-seller and distiller – on the last day . . . when Thomas Molson shall be chairman and William Dow secretary. Sorry am I to say that Thomas Molson, a classical man, a man of education, has a college for education! a church for salvation! and a distillery for damnation!'

The more leisurely pace of Montreal life at the turn of the century is indicated by the habits of the trains and street railway cars. The departing traveller could not depend on the trains' starting on time, the reason often being that the conductor was delaying departure awaiting the arrival of an important passenger, of the type who today would be called a V.I.P. On the street railway, cars stopped whenever someone wanted to get off or on, a convenient and reasonable arrangement.

Over the century, Montreal streets had not shown much improvement. Only twenty-six miles were asphalted, and these were reportedly full of holes. The wooden sidewalks, which during floods provided convenient rafts, were described as almost impassable on rainy days unless one was prepared to wade ankle-deep in water.

Montreal's reaction to the Boer War was mixed. *La Patrie* asked why Canadians should go to the Transvaal and 'assist in reducing its million people to subjection', while Henri Bourassa rose to prominence by his opposition to Canada's participation in what he termed 'imperial wars'. A Montrealer by birth, and a grandson of Louis Joseph Papineau, Bourassa entered the federal Parliament in 1896, but resigned his seat because of Laurier's South African war policy. Bourassa took credit for the birth of the French-Canadian nationalist movement in 1900, ascribing its impetus to his re-election without opposition along with that of Israel Tarte. In the summer of 1901, Bourassa went to England to observe the political temper there, particularly with reference to Can-

ada. Upon his return he gave a lecture in the Théâtre National Français on October 20, 1901, in which he declared: 'The imperial movement stems from the same foundation and tends towards the same result as the battle of the eighteenth century by the autocratic government of George III – tax the colonies to pay for the defense of the empire.' One of his most powerful pamphlets was entitled 'What Do We Owe England?' It listed all the reasons he felt Canada had for not being grateful to England, many of them concerning imperial concessions to the United States which he felt had been made at the expense of Canada.

Les Débats strongly supported Bourassa's stand, and in reply to 'an Orange journal in our sister province' that had attacked Jules Vernier's article on Canada's participation in the Boer War, *Les Débats* said, 'We believe we have in 1775, in 1812, 1866, 1870 and 1885 given England proof of the loyalty which we agreed to practise by treaty,' but added, 'The flag which we have promised to respect is the red striped with blue, threatened on our soil, nothing else.'

The relief of Ladysmith by the British forces in 1901 was not given even a passing notice in *Les Débats*, and the general lack of celebration on the part of Montreal's French-speaking community roused the ire of McGill students who (a civic holiday having been announced to mark the occasion) headed a crowd that surged towards the offices of *La Presse*, the City Hall, and finally the Montreal branch of Laval University. The riots that ensued were given ample space in *Les Débats*, which commented, 'The English remember the plains of Abraham but forget Carillon.' The editor described the scene on March 1, 1901, when a band of rowdies,

> who one says were students from McGill University, invaded St. James Street, and during three hours under the windows of the office of Alderman LeBoeuf, have attacked persons, destroyed property, and so on. They then went to the offices of *La Presse* and to City Hall where we have had the sorrow to see a French-Canadian Mayor congratulate them on their patriotism and gaiety. Then at Laval University where 100 or 200 of these brave lads found five or six French Canadians, they went in search of flags, and finding none, they hoisted one of their own red rags on the front of the building.

Les Débats remarked, 'All that was already almost enough to force the question upon our French Canadians of Montreal if they live in the 19th century and in a free country,' but in the evening McGill students again besieged Laval where this time 'the Laval students were ready for them and gave them, instead of a whiff of grapeshot, a douche of cold water.' The ultra-nationalist newspaper concluded its description

of the riots by declaring that the 'attack by McGill students constituted an insult to our university, our flag and our nationality' and shouted for 'Eyes for an eye, teeth for a tooth, and blood for blood'.

A few months later, in June, when news of the relief of Pretoria reached Montreal, the civic holiday passed without incident, perhaps because university students were off for the summer. Lady Roddick noted that 'in the evening, we helped the Drummonds celebrate. Their house was brilliantly illuminated with torches all along the fence, and as the military passed we all sent off Roman candles. Several groups of small boys passed along too, carrying effigies of a dead Kruger.'

The new century was ushered in on the eve of January 1, 1901, when church bells struck the hour of midnight and watchnight services were held in many of the city's churches. No brighter sun shone during the whole winter than that which greeted the new century the next day, when volunteer regiments paraded and giant receptions were held in drill halls and at the Y.M.C.A., while the young 'enjoyed themselves on the curling and skating rinks'.

The talk at the tea tables centred around Mr. Winston Churchill's lecture in Montreal a few nights before and his quarrel with his manager, Major Pond, over what some gossips reported as 'Mr. Churchill's demands for double what he had contracted to speak for'. However, the Montreal *Weekly Witness* cleared the matter up, reporting that Mr. Churchill's failure to speak in Brantford was owing to a breakdown in health, not in financial arrangements. In Montreal, his lecture began late. 'Indeed,' reported the *Weekly Witness*, 'the lecturer did not appear until 8.30; if he had begun at 8, the hall would hardly have been half full.' When Dr. Francis Shepherd of McGill asked Churchill how it happened that all the troops shown in his lantern slides were Canadians, the 'brilliant young adventurer' replied, 'Oh, those troops will all be Australians when I get to Australia.'

Churchill's visit was followed by one of more importance in September 1901 with the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall (the future King George V and Queen Mary) in the city on a state visit. Describing the efforts of City Hall to spruce up for the occasion, *Les Débats* noticed that some paintings were hung 'to flatter the royal eye' – Edward VII, Queen Victoria, and others – but *Les Débats* took exception to the hanging of a painting of Napoleon I after the abdication at Fontainebleau. Asked *Les Débats*, 'Why not offer to their Royal Highnesses Napoleon conquered at Waterloo?' and it demanded that the city fathers replace this painting with 'the noble figure of one of our great Canadians'.

Still, the visit of the royal pair brought out the finest in the city.

Dressed in the uniform of a British admiral, the Duke of Cornwall, accompanied by the Duchess, attired in a 'loose-fitting dress of a dark shade with rich furs on her shoulders', drove through huge crowds of people, many of whom were in from the country, their rustic garb providing a sharp contrast to the city-bred swells. The royal guests stayed at the mansion of Lord Strathcona on Dorchester Street, and during their visit received a royal welcome at Laval University and later at McGill, where honorary degrees were conferred. At McGill, the Duke and Duchess were shown the new Royal Victoria College where, thanks to the generosity of Lord Strathcona, women could follow courses leading to the degrees of bachelor of arts or science.

As so often recurs in the annals of North America's cities, Montreal's civic affairs had fallen into the hands of 'old pros', with the usual results – graft and maladministration. In the midst of Montreal's seeming plenty, the *Herald* sounded a warning note. 'Montreal's civic affairs will drop back into chaos and corruption if Aldermen of the stamp of Mr. Ames and Mr. Laporte retire, disheartened from the fray.' However, Ames and Laporte stuck to their posts at City Hall, focusing the attention of their supporters in and out of the city council on the need for a true reform movement. This sense of the need for change no doubt had begun to emerge from the efforts of Ames back in 1896 when he undertook his study of the Montreal social scene. The formation of the Volunteer Election League in 1892 had set the goal 'to elect honest men to municipal office by honourable means'. War was declared on bribery, while the use of a card identification system was instituted by Ames in his own ward, through which his campaign workers made minute descriptions of each of his voters and consulted this when the voters arrived at the polls, in an effort to foil impersonators. Great interest was aroused in other Canadian cities by this card identification system as a means of preventing false voting.

Various groups interested in good government began to emerge and ultimately would merge. In urging Ames's re-election to the city council in 1904, the Junior Conservative Club of Montreal reminded Montrealers that in 1898 it had been the current belief that 'a toll-gate existed and no civic position could be obtained without paying for it', that 'City Hall was thronged with merchants and contractors demanding payment for goods and services long over-due', and that City Hall had no money to meet these obligations. By 1903 the reformers under Ames took credit for the city clean-up during which they claimed 'that all civic appointments and promotions were made solely by merit and that the financial obligations of the city had been met, though the taxes remained what they had been in 1898.' Yet Justice Cannon, in the 500-page report he

submitted on municipal affairs between 1902 and 1909, concluded that the city was saturated with corruption, that most aldermen were concerned only 'with private interests for themselves, their families, and friends, and that 25 per cent of the annual revenue was siphoned off as spoils'.

Still, Ames and his reformers had made a dent in the spoils system. The city debt, which in 1889 was $11,270,000, had increased to $25,102,000 by 1895. To curb this rising debt, a new city charter, largely the work of Ames and the reform group, put a ceiling on the amount of debt the city could incur. Reforms in city sanitary conditions were inaugurated by Ames, who reorganized the health department. These efforts were applauded by labour groups. James B. Mack, the vice-president of the Trades and Labour Council of Montreal, acknowledged that when Ames first entered the City Council some 6,000 privy pits existed, but as chairman of the Board of Health, Ames had reduced the number to 1,000. Labour leader Mack also extolled the Ames-Holden shoe factory, which he said was the first in the city to adopt the 'union label'. Ames's sociological study was regarded by labour as 'an effort to get the real facts regarding the lives of working people and to induce capitalists to erect better dwellings for workers'. Mack concluded his eulogy of Ames by saying that the alderman had taken a firm stand against child and female labour, and that one of his first acts as alderman was to force through a reluctant council a raise in the wages of civic workers from 10 to 12½ cents per hour. This *entente* between labour and the reform element within the city council continued over the next few years and was finally successful in pushing through major reforms in the city administration in the form of a board of control, and a revamping of the structures and size of the City Council.

The success of the civic reformers came only after careful and patient work, culminating in a vigorous campaign during the year 1909, when they succeeded in persuading the Quebec government of the need for action following the presentation of the Cannon Report. In the subsequent referendum held on September 20, the public voted overwhelmingly to establish an elective board of control which would take financial matters out of the hands of the city council and place the public purse in the hands of four commissioners.

The year 1909, which saw this municipal reform battle beginning to take the shape of unity between its various groups, also had its more grisly aspects. There were many unpleasant non-political events to distract public attention. A total of 835 'violent and suspicious' deaths were investigated by the coroner. Of the violent deaths, horses still caused more than the recently arrived automobiles. Kicks from horses

caused four deaths for every three caused by automobiles. The railroads claimed fifty-nine, while fifty-seven died from drowning, and suicides in the city numbered twenty-nine. The most spectacular accident of the year occurred on St. Patrick's Day when the overnight Boston train, driverless, crashed through the walls of Windsor Station, crushing to death a Mrs. Nixon and her two young children who were awaiting Mr. Nixon's arrival on another train after an absence of two years in Calgary. The engineer of the runaway train was found dying several miles outside the city limits, having been blown from the engine by the bursting of a plug. Less spectacular but serious enough was a gas explosion at Place Viger Station on New Year's Eve. Twenty-three people were injured while awaiting the departure of the Quebec City sleeper.

In civic politics, the gauntlet was thrown into the municipal election arena early in 1910 by a 'group of important citizens of Montreal' who intended to 'combat the good fights of liberalism in the exact sense of the word, since liberalism does not now have the form and tendency which Laurier expressed in a great discourse at Quebec in 1877'. The group of 'important citizens' rallied around a new French newspaper which took the name of the former radical journal, *Le Pays*, and was managed by Henri Craig. Although it professed its policy in the more general terms of desiring the abolition of the Legislative Council, the reform of the Senate, fixed periods of Parliament, free and compulsory education, and other federal reforms, *Le Pays* also turned a critical eye to the local scene in Montreal. It supported the incumbent mayor, L. Payette, whom the editor recommended as a candidate for the board of control, and bitterly attacked the reform candidates, particularly ex-Mayor Hormisdas Laporte and Raoul Dandurand. *Le Pays* described Laporte and Dandurand as 'the whole of the Citizens' Committee, which has constituted itself a petty oligarchy', and charged that during Laporte's administration there had been waste and carelessness, and that 'one bought positions in his time just as before.' *Le Pays* accused Dandurand of 'tolerating a municipal entrepreneur to take a personal subscription to aid the election of aldermen' and asked 'why the people of Montreal have abdicated their rights and authority to the benefit of these two men.' *Le Pays* clearly was interested in reform, so long as it left the city 'machine' strictly alone.

A week later, the same journal, in an article entitled 'Soyons maîtres chez-nous' (a battle cry that was to be heard, minus the 'soyons', in provincial affairs fifty years later), referred to a 'black office' at Côte St. Lambert where the committee of citizens wished 'to impose upon us Dr. Lachapelle for the Board of Control – a man who has only worked

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At the same time, another lively meeting was in progress at the Engineers' Hall in Point St. Charles where ex-Mayor William Galbraith of Westmount attempted to speak in support of Senator Casgrain, but was shouted down by the 'Irishmen of the Point who refused to hear any opposition to Dr. Guerin and raised an uproar'.

The next day at the polls the candidates of the Citizens' Committee made a clean sweep. Twelve of the former aldermen who had supported the last-ditch opposition of Alderman Giroux were defeated by reform candidates, and ex-Mayor Laporte was able to boast: 'We have won the whole slate with two exceptions and these exceptions are two men returned from the new wards who are not opposed to our reform platform.' Laporte also claimed that 'Workmen have not hesitated to vote for the professional and financial men on our ticket, especially as they were represented by Joseph Ainey, a labour candidate, who secured the biggest majority in the voting for the Board of Control.' Laporte did not mention the little group of 'socialists' who met on January 18 to read Mr. A. St. Martin out of the party 'because he violated one of the fundamental principles of the party by speaking from a platform that was not socialist and urged the election of candidates who were not socialists'. As their candidate, the socialists supported Edmond Western for the Board of Control, but, like the old councillors, he was snowed under by the Citizens' Committee candidates.

In the mayoralty race, Dr. Guerin secured 26,847 votes, while Senator Casgrain polled 16,165. Elected to the Board of Control, in addition to Ainey, were three other candidates of the Citizens' Committee. Guerin secured his largest majorities in the English wards, but only three wards voted against him.

On February 2, when all the votes had been duly recorded, the old council members must have reflected upon their fate, though some still retained their seats. Among these was Alderman L. A. Lapointe, who had been leader of the old council and was returned by acclamation. But the new structure of the council with only twenty-five members instead of forty-five, and a Board of Control which took over the complete operation of the city's finances, almost made the aldermen superfluous. In a face-saving gesture, Lapointe professed to enter into the spirit of the new administration, saying that the smaller body would be easier to work with, and that in a council of forty-five 'we saw the formation of factions and ambitions among the aldermen.'

The new mayor, Dr. Guerin, expressed his appreciation of the fact that the French Canadians 'refused to be led away by race cries and

rallied strongly for the reform administration'. *Le Pays* licked its liberal wounds by remarking sourly that the conservative party now had 'the majority in the municipal council'. For the next few years, the reformers set about to put into practice their paper plans for purification of the city's business. How difficult this was to prove would soon become apparent.

The election excitement over, Montrealers settled back to enjoy the spring and summer of the tenth year of the twentieth century. And, indeed, they were not disappointed. One pleasant Saturday afternoon about six o'clock a mighty roaring was heard in the heavens. Window sashes were thrown up and people dashed out of doors to gaze upwards at the first airplane to cross Montreal skies. It was Count de Lesseps gambolling around cockily in his monoplane, the *Scarabee* – the flying machine he had used to fly the English Channel a few weeks earlier. Attached to the fuselage of the machine was an inflated bladder which was expected to do yeoman service should Count de Lesseps and his *Scarabee* plunge into the St. Lawrence. At the same time, speeding along the dusty lakeshore road in a sixty-horsepower automobile, was Bernard de Lesseps, trying to keep pace with his flying brother. But on the return race from the Lachine Bridge to Valois the auto fell behind by three minutes. Overhead, the *Scarabee* acknowledged the plaudits of Montrealers by tipping its wings over Victoria Bridge, circling City Hall and Mount Royal, and soaring over McGill University and the Windsor Hotel before it turned tail to seek its resting spot back on the lakeshore.

What may be termed the highlight of Dr. Guerin's years in office had (although it was a time of domestic turmoil) no political context. That was the occasion, several months after his election, when Montreal played host to the International Eucharistic Congress, attended by an estimated 200,000 Catholics, in September 1910. In welcoming the eminent guests to the city, Mayor Guerin hailed Montreal as 'the Rome of the New World', his words echoing the dream of Bishop Bourget who, many years earlier, had described Montreal as 'Ville de Marie – the Rome of the West'. The opening of the Congress undoubtedly gave credence to these pretensions. The official party included the Papal Delegate, Vincenzo Cardinal Vannutelli, and some 300 prelates, clergy, and laymen who accompanied him to Canada.

The Congress, the first of its kind in the New World, was formally opened with a service in what was then St. James Cathedral, later renamed Mary, Queen of the World. A message from the Pope was read to an enormous congregation. After three general meetings during the next few days as well as thirteen working sessions, the Congress ended

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with a dramatic and solemn procession of the Holy Eucharist, which lasted for five hours and was viewed by an estimated half million people as it passed through the streets. In the procession marched 60,000 men, with their various and distinctive religious emblems and banners, followed by a thousand choir boys in brilliant red cassocks and surplices. Next came the religious orders of the city and more than two thousand priests in their vestments. At the rear of the procession marched a hundred bishops and archbishops, resplendent in their copes and mitres. Finally, under a huge golden canopy, walked Cardinal Vannutelli, carrying the Sacred Host. By the time the procession reached Fletcher's Field, the huge playing-field at the foot of the precipitous eastern slope of Mount Royal, dusk had fallen and electric lights on the altar shone out as the Cardinal gave the benediction, ending the week-long Congress. So ended one of Montreal's great historic religious events – perhaps its greatest.

Dr. Guerin's political duties as mayor were not by any means so pleasant as his role as official host to the Eucharistic Congress had been. His administration was under constant fire from the deposed councillors (especially members of the old 'solid 23', many of whom would regain their seats in the next civic elections). From the beginning of Guerin's term the deposed 'old-timers' were hard at work for the return of the spoils system. Success was not long in coming their way. The Board of Control, especially, had attracted their hostility. They defeated Guerin with Lavallée in 1912. By 1914, City Hall was once more in the hands of the 'boys in the back room' whose spokesman, the new Mayor Médéric Martin, of whom we shall hear much more later, had been loud in his pleas to Quebec to abolish the Board of Control.

So ended the brief days of clean and businesslike administration at City Hall. The Board, first emasculated, was soon to be destroyed. Montreal would return to the old game of inter-aldermanic 'deals' ('You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours') which would be the governing technique of the metropolis for almost half a century to come.

With the passing of Guerin from the mayoralty another custom passed – the alternating of French- and English-speaking chief magistrates. Dr. Guerin was the last of a considerable line of non-French mayors of the bilingual city.

20 The Laurier Years

Wilfrid Laurier's rise to power as Canada's first Prime Minister of French-Canadian origin could never be called meteoric, as might be said of Louis St. Laurent's in later years and certainly of that of Pierre Elliott Trudeau (who came to power as almost a total tyro of professional politics and government). His drive to the top was steady to the point of plodding. Much of that plodding was done in Montreal, although his true home and the scene of many of his early adventures in journalism and politics was in the south shore county of Arthabaska. But until Laurier became a great national figure Montreal was the primary scene of his activities. It was there that, in addition to practising law, he became a leader in the anti-Establishment Institut Canadien, through which he and his rebellious young friends fought the Tory Bleus, the ultramontane clergy, and, one might say, all those who regarded Montreal and the surrounding province as their own special enclave of exploitation and power.

After spending three years as a back-bencher in the provincial legislature, from 1871 to 1874, Laurier was elected to the federal House in 1874 and in 1877 was raised to a cabinet post by the Liberal Prime Minister, Alexander Mackenzie. A year later the Tories regained power, and Laurier, who carried his own seat, spent the next years in the bleak

shades of the Opposition. In 1887 the Liberals chose him as party leader. Not for almost ten years, in the general election of June 23, 1896, did the party he led regain power, winning 49 of its 117 seats in Quebec (an increase of 14 over the 1891 figure). Laurier and his followers retained power through three further general elections, until Borden swept the country on the reciprocity issue in 1911. Meanwhile, knighthood (1897) and other honours came Laurier's way. But the road to success was long and difficult.

While in general it was a period of growth and prosperity throughout the country, these years were also a time of troubles, not the least of which – the wrangle that stands in the history books as the Manitoba School Issue – had special bearing on French Canada and therefore on Montreal. Laurier's position was a peculiar one, which might well be called ambivalent, yet was actually one of simple logic which had great bearing on Canada's federal system. In one sense, it could almost be described as an anti-French position (and Laurier's enemies were not slow to take advantage of this apparent feature). On the other hand, and this was Laurier's real stand, federal intervention in the education system of Manitoba, or of any other province, would have been contrary to the whole intent of the British North America Act, which clearly makes the point that education is a matter of purely provincial jurisdiction.*

In 1890 two acts were passed by the Manitoba Legislature: an Act respecting the Department of Education and an Act respecting Public Schools. These laws established a single, state-supported, non-sectarian school system and abolished Catholic separate schools.

The Manitoba Roman Catholics appealed to the federal government to pass a remedial measure; the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council decided that the appeal should be heard; and the government ordered Manitoba to supplement its school legislation in the interests of the Roman Catholics. Manitoba refused. The Roman Catholic hierarchy, supported by the French-Canadian members of the cabinet, pressed for remedial legislation, and the 1896 election was fought on this basis.

*The British North America Act of 1867 (Section 93) says that 'In and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education, subject and according to the following provisions: 1. Nothing in any such Law shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons have by Law in the Province at the Union' and in a subsequent paragraph adds: 'Where in any Province a System of Separate or Dissentient Schools exists by Law at the Union or is thereafter established by the Legislature of the Province, an Appeal shall lie to the Governor General in Council from any Act or Decision of any Provincial Authority affecting any Right or Privilege of the Protestant or Roman Catholic Minority of the Queen's Subjects in relation to Education.'

The Liberals, led by Laurier, supported Manitoba's provincial rights to legislate on education, even if it meant appearing to turn their backs on the cultural interests of their fellow French Canadians in Manitoba. Laurier and his men were able to induce their *concitoyens* to accept this solution, with the result that a majority of Quebecers voted the Grit ticket.

Sir Richard Cartwright had warned Laurier as early as August 9, 1889, about the possible policy of the Liberal government of Greenway in Manitoba, saying that 'It is probable that Greenway and his people will move to abolish separate schools and the French language in Manitoba.' In August 1889 that prominent Ontario anti-French Protestant, D'Alton McCarthy, had formed a branch of the Equal Rights Association in Montreal. (Three years earlier he had formed the parent Canadian branch of the Imperial Federation League, to oppose what he termed renewed 'annexationist' leanings and to press for imperial preference.)

In early February 1890, the same staunch, bigoted Orangeman put up a trial balloon when he moved in the House of Commons that the use of the French language in the Northwest Territories be suppressed. The Quebec members, including such lifelong Tories as Langevin, Chapleau, and others, maintained that the French language had been official in the courts and assembly of the Territories since 1875, and could not now be abolished.

In this attack, Laurier had remained silent, while the convert to Catholicism, John Thompson, Macdonald's Minister of Justice (who subsequently was to become Prime Minister for a brief time), proposed a compromise which, in effect, gave in to McCarthy – that is, the people of the Northwest Territories were to decide the language question themselves, but the principle that uniformity of language in the Dominion was expedient was denied. Laurier himself finally protested that he found 'nothing in this bill, I must say, but the old, old spirit of domination and intolerance which, in this land . . . has always characterized the course of pure undiluted Toryism . . . it constitutes a declaration of war against the French race.' He went on: 'If this measure . . . were not to be followed by any other, if it were to remain as it appears here, a measure for the proscription of the French language confined to the Northwest Territories alone, where the French population is small, I would be inclined to say, let the measure pass. . . . But this is only a preliminary skirmish, soon to be followed by a general onslaught upon the whole French race in Canada.'

And, indeed, such proved to be the case. Less than a month after the debate on the Northwest Territories' use of French, McCarthy was in

Winnipeg urging the Manitobans 'to make this a British country in fact as in name', and within a month the Manitoba legislature had abolished French and Catholic denominational schools. Laurier tried to placate his Quebec supporters by maintaining that he had no choice but to protect the principle of provincial autonomy.

The Roman Catholics of Manitoba carried the argument to the Supreme Court of Canada, which upheld the provincial legislation. They then appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, in 1891. Again Laurier remained silent. Prime Minister Macdonald took no action, although he had promised Archbishop Taché of St. Boniface that something would be done, provided no great commotion were raised, before the 1891 election. (He undertook that if the courts were to declare the Manitoba acts beyond the power of the province, the federal government would nullify them.) But the Catholic schools in Manitoba were still closed two years later.

Actually it was Israel Tarte of Montreal who took up the gauntlet in Quebec. After the Privy Council had declared that the acts were solely within the jurisdiction of the province, Tarte accused the federal government of dallying behind judicial backs, while Manitoba Catholics were denied their schools. Laurier rose in the House to second Tarte's attack, saying that Manitoba claimed that its schools were non-sectarian, though the Catholic minority claimed that they were merely thinly disguised Protestant schools. 'If that statement is true,' said Laurier, 'what I say now I shall be prepared to repeat and would repeat on every platform throughout Ontario, every platform throughout Manitoba, nay, in every Orange lodge throughout the land, that the Catholic minority has been subjected to a most infamous tyranny.'

Believing that Laurier was not taking as strong a position as events required, since he had been quoted, rightly or wrongly, as saying that perhaps the new non-sectarian schools were not simply Protestant schools as their opponents avowed, the Catholics of Manitoba sent a delegation to him in 1894, supporting their argument with facts. The delegates pointed out that the new board in charge of education did not include a single Catholic member, that the certificates of Catholic teachers had been revoked, and that Catholics had been refused permission to teach in their own buildings, even under the supervision of the Protestant school board. They complained bitterly that they were taxed for the support of these Protestant schools, that the textbooks were in effect Protestant, and that religious instruction was Protestant in tone.

Laurier hedged with the delegation, believing as he did that education must remain a matter of purely provincial jurisdiction. For two

more years he continued to hedge, to the point where even a parliamentary Orangeman taunted him by saying, 'I regret exceedingly that I, an Orangeman since 1855, have to stand on the floor of this House and vindicate the rights of the Catholic minority of Manitoba, when the Leader of the Opposition will not stand up for the rights of the minority of his own religion.' Obviously, this view was not shared by the majority of Orangemen, who as early as 1876 had drawn up a strongly anti-clerical program which stated that no public money should be given for sectarian purposes, or for the maintenance of separate schools. Yet the Grand Master of Ontario West, James L. Hughes, asked in 1896, 'How would the Orangeman receive the cry "Hands Off Quebec" if the Legislature of Quebec should pass a law taking away any of the educational rights of the Protestant minority of that province?'

By 1895, the Privy Council had again returned a judgment on the ticklish school question, declaring that the federal government could, if it wished, take remedial action on behalf of the Manitoba minority, thus handing the question back to the federal cabinet. For nine days the cabinet postponed a decision as to whether to legislate or not. Lawyers of the Catholic minority were summoned to present their case, D'Alton McCarthy argued powerfully against them, but finally the government compromised and drafted a blunt order in council, directing the Manitoba government to restore the full rights of its Catholic minority, or face remedial action by the federal government. Tarte was delighted; Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell, a past Orange Grand Master, had acted on behalf of the French Catholics of the west, while the French Catholic leader of the Opposition, Laurier, took a more devious route, but one that in the end was politically more successful. He supported the Manitoba Liberals in their bid for non-sectarian schools. The position resulted in Manitoba's going almost solidly Conservative in the 1896 election, choosing four Conservatives to two Grits, although the Liberals carried the country. The seventh seat went to an independent.

Of the twenty-nine Roman Catholic bishops in the country, six only, all from Quebec, had come out flatly against Laurier, but it was a futile gesture. Laurier's stand on the Manitoba school question may have appeared anti-clerical to the faithful, but there is no doubt that it went far towards establishing provincial rights in educational matters.

As to the Quebec hierarchy's reaction to Laurier's stand on Manitoba, a collective pastoral was issued on May 16, 1896, just prior to the general elections, proclaiming that 'All Catholics should vote only for the candidates who will formally and solemnly pledge themselves to vote in Parliament in favour of legislation giving the Catholics of

Manitoba the school laws which are recognized as theirs by the Privy Council in England.' Monsignor Marois, the Vicar-General of Quebec, pronounced it a mortal sin to vote Liberal, while Bishop Laflèche of St. Boniface, Manitoba, condemned Laurier's stand as 'the most categorical affirmation of the liberalism condemned by the Church' and said that 'A Catholic cannot under pain of sinning in a grave matter vote for the chief of a party who has formulated so publicly such an error.' Despite this hostility of the Church, Montreal's and Quebec's French Canadians voted three to one for Laurier. It was, perhaps, a silent protest by the voters against clerical intervention in the free rights of the citizen. Either that or Quebec was not going to reject Canada's first French-speaking prime minister. Or it may be safer to suggest a combination of these two factors as decisive.

Shortly after the election Laurier addressed the Club National in Montreal, where he clarified his position to the young Liberals and attempted to restrain the anti-clericalism of the Rouge wing, saying, 'Show to the world that Catholicism is compatible with the exercise of liberty in its highest acceptation; that the Catholics of the country will render to God what is God's, to Caesar what is Caesar's.' One of the Montreal Rouge extremists, Honoré Beaugrand, who had proclaimed a death struggle between the government and the hierarchy, was forced by clerical pressure to sell his newspaper, *La Patrie* (which was immediately purchased by the sons of Israel Tarte).

When the Liberals swept Quebec's provincial elections in 1897 and the new premier, F. G. Marchand, sought to put Quebec schools under government control, Montreal's Bishop Bruchési blocked his move.

In Ottawa, after the federal election of 1896, Laurier, Tarte, and Oliver Mowat of Ontario met with the Manitoba cabinet members to hammer out a compromise solution. Laurier sent a delegation to Rome to ask for the Vatican's intervention in the troublesome Manitoba matter. They went off in September, but returned before the end of October with the ominous report that many of Canada's ecclesiastics had been there well before them, and that the impression at the Vatican was that the Queen had graciously granted justice to her Catholic subjects, which was being withheld by Laurier, an anti-clerical, an atheist, and possibly even a Freemason.

In the west at this time Bourassa and Tarte were busily 'selling' the Laurier position of the primacy of provincial rights in education. Bourassa was devoutly Catholic, but he was willing to learn from Tarte Laurier's true reasons for his apparent capitulation in Manitoba. Bourassa wrote a memorial on the subject, proclaiming that the Catholic Liberals' position on the school question and on public life in general,

which Laurier had sent to Rome, signed by himself and his supporters, was the only 'correct' stand to take.

In November, Tarte discussed with leading Catholics and with Archbishop Taché of St. Boniface possible ways of finding a suitable settlement. A compromise was finally reached – the Catholic schools would be reopened, but the right of the Church to organize school districts, to segregate Catholics within a framework of separate education, was denied. What was granted by the Manitoba government was that in each town school of forty-five pupils, and in each village school of twenty-five pupils, there could be one duly qualified Catholic teacher. Religious instruction could be given by a priest during the last half-hour of each school day. There could be no special privileges of language – only the same conditions that applied to all incoming immigrants, such as, say, the Germans. The Manitoba bill read: 'Where ten of the pupils in any school speak the French language or any language other than English, as their native language, the teaching of such pupils shall be conducted in French (or such other language) and English upon the bilingual system.'

Less formal and official was the understanding that Catholics would be given reasonable representation on school boards and advisory councils, and a voice in the selection of textbooks. On November 19, 1896, Laurier released the terms of this agreement and the storm broke. The Grand Orange Lodge of Manitoba denounced the arrangement, even though D'Alton McCarthy was inclined to regard it as a reasonable compromise. Archbishop Langevin, who had succeeded Monsignor Taché in St. Boniface, thundered that 'there would be a revolt in Quebec which will ring throughout Canada . . . The settlement is a farce. The fight has only begun.' By the end of December no Catholic in the Quebec diocese of Chicoutimi could receive the sacrament if he subscribed to Tarte's newspaper. In Montreal, on December 26, Pacaud's *L'Electeur* was silenced by the Church, only to reappear on the following Monday under a new name, *Le Soleil*, with 4,000 new subscribers.

In early December Laurier sent another delegation to Rome, headed by Charles Fitzpatrick, his solicitor general. Fitzpatrick was an Irish Catholic – one of the lawyers who had been sent west earlier to defend Riel. Lord Aberdeen arranged with Laurier that the son of the English Chief Justice, Lord Russell, could accompany Fitzpatrick to Rome. Edward Blake prepared the memorial that Fitzpatrick and Russell would carry to the Vatican. The Bleu newspapers accused Laurier of succumbing to bigotry, but Laurier boasted of having won over the hitherto overwhelmingly Protestant McCarthy and Mowat.

The outcome of Fitzpatrick's mission was the sending of Monsignor

Merry del Val to Canada as Apostolic Delegate. In May 1897, he arrived in Ottawa, cool and remote, insisting that he had come to inquire, not to make pronouncements. The 32-year-old prelate travelled to Manitoba, Quebec, and Toronto, where he talked with bishops, cabinet ministers, and leaders of all sorts. It was Chapleau, once a Tory minister but now Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, who presented the Liberal case to Merry del Val and actually led the eminent visitor to understand, appreciate, and even lend support to, the Laurier cause.

Subsequently, while in Europe for the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Laurier visited Rome and was given an hour's audience with the Pope, who was friendly. He had had frequent talks with Merry del Val and meetings with Montreal's Bishop Bruchési, who had tried to placate, and lessen the extremism of, Archbishop Langevin on the school question.

In December 1877 Charles Russell went back to the Vatican where a pronouncement was expected daily. On December 18 the papal encyclical called *Affari Vos*, dealing with the Manitoba school crisis, was issued in Rome and was to be read in all the pulpits a month later in Canada. Said the encyclical: the Act of Confederation had conferred on Catholic children the right to education in public schools in keeping with their conscientious convictions. The Parliament of Manitoba had abolished this right by a contrary law. After commending the bishops for opposing the law, the encyclical continued: 'It is not lawful for our children to seek the benefits of education in schools in which the Catholic religion is ignored or decisively combated, in schools where its doctrine is despised and its fundamental principles repudiated.' The compromises of the Laurier-Greenway deal were termed 'defective, unsuitable, insufficient'. Yet, said the encyclical, it was essential not to lose sight of the principles of moderation, of meekness and brotherly charity. Until Catholics obtained their full rights, they should not refuse partial satisfaction. Thus the Pope accepted the imperfect compromise in Manitoba. But Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface did not. He was adamant that Laurier must give pledges in writing to ameliorate conditions and to guarantee such details as choice of textbooks, setting of curricula, training and qualification of teachers. Langevin maintained so vigorous a campaign across the country, in fact, that Bruchési, now elevated to Archbishop of Montreal, suggested that Laurier should outline some proposals in the Speech from the Throne that would quieten the extremists. But Laurier, having got the Manitoba schools question very largely out of the political arena, had no intention of opening that Pandora's box again. In two encounters in Ottawa with Langevin and Bruchési, Laurier made this plain. Langevin was irreconcilable – even

though the schools were once more open. Luckily for Laurier, his relations with Bruchési were far more cordial and the latter's influence in Rome great. Gradually interest in the schools question died down, until the agitation in 1901 with the Northwest Territories settlement, and (more serious) in 1905 with the creation of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The impact of all this, although it took place far away, was of vital importance to French-speaking Montreal.

When, in 1905, Laurier introduced the Autonomy Bills establishing the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan (drafted by his Minister of Justice, Charles Fitzpatrick), he dealt cautiously with the school question, urging tolerance and providing for the continuance of the tradition of the 1875 Northwest Territories Act which gave the minority the right to organize separate schools and share in public funds for education. This latter clause had been introduced after Clifford Sifton had departed for a rest in Florida. The Conservative Opposition leader, Robert Borden, said the control of schools should be left to the people of the new provinces, and, although the proposals of Laurier met with little criticism in the west itself, Ontario Conservatives raised noisy protest, under the leadership of such devout Orangemen as Sam Hughes and Dr. Sproule, Orange Grand Master. The Autonomy Bills had been drafted by an Irish Roman Catholic from Quebec in consultation with territorial authorities and with the Apostolic Delegate, through the agency of Bourassa. Such advisers provided Ontario Orangemen and Protestants of all shades with fodder to suspect 'papist plottings'. The Toronto *Telegram* murmured darkly about 'fastening the dead hand of denomination control upon the new provinces'. Ontario Conservatives were not the only people to react. Revolt even stirred in the Liberal camp. Clifford Sifton hurried back from his Florida holiday to tender his resignation to Laurier as Minister of the Interior. In Montreal both the Liberal *Herald* and the *Witness* were vociferous in their opposition to the school clause.

Sifton succeeded in persuading Laurier to accept a compromise that would include the restrictions of the Territorial Ordinances of 1901. It was debated in March 1905. Bourassa and Rodolphe Lemieux spoke of the part played by French-Canadian priests and colonists in opening up the west and asked for the descendants of these colonists the same treatment as that given the Protestant minority in Quebec. During the debates, Herbert Ames, by then a Conservative member from Montreal, supported Laurier's bill, as did nine other Quebec Conservatives, as well as most of Laurier's Quebec Liberal supporters.

Bourassa, on the other hand, would not let the issue die. On April 17, 1905, at a meeting at the Monument National in Montreal, called by

the Ligue Nationaliste, he again asserted the French Canadians' right to enjoy the same status in the west as the English-Canadian Protestants enjoyed in Quebec (shades of 1967!). He traced the development of Canadian educational law in the west, showing how, bit by bit, as the English population increased, the rights of French Canadians were revoked. He described the efforts of the Catholics to secure redress from the Supreme Court of Canada and from the federal government at Ottawa, the outcome of which had been the rounding out of secularization of the separate schools in 1901. Bourassa warned that at any time the western educational authorities could suppress the teaching of religion and French, yet the Catholics were forced by compulsory attendance and taxation laws to support these schools. 'Nothing in the past thirteen years,' Bourassa told his Montreal audience, 'justified the reliance on the benevolence of the majority [in the west]', and in the hope that 'this iniquity would not be consummated I have come to demand the moral support of the people of this great city of Montreal . . . the very heart from which go forth the currents which animate the body of the Canadian nation . . . of this city where religious liberty reigns so splendidly, where Protestants and Catholics, English and French, live in such admirable harmony . . .'

After Bourassa's Montreal speech, Laurier wrote worriedly, 'Our friend Bourassa has begun, in Quebec, a campaign which may well cause us some trouble.' In fact the two were approaching the parting of the ways. Laurier delayed third reading of the Autonomy Bills, though by-elections in Ontario fed the anti-papacy flames and in turn roused hot French-Canadian reaction; but finally, with another compromise that guaranteed half an hour of religious instruction *per diem*, the bill was passed, adding a new grievance among many Quebecers against the federal government, English Canada – even Laurier himself.

The Manitoba School Issue could therefore be termed the primary domestic problem of Laurier's years in office, but, as already noted, they were years of general prosperity in the country, and certainly years of growth, as the country itself expanded and population and industries grew. It was also the period when the prairies began to fill up, largely with homesteaders, and Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta (especially Saskatchewan) began to be known as 'the world's bread-basket'. The quickly expanding wheat trade was reflected in the tremendous growth of Montreal as a wheat shipping port and the development of specially designed ships for the carrying of this new bulk cargo. Talk was already being heard of a through seaway leading into the heart of the continent.

It was also the period that might well be termed that of Canada's

second railway-building boom. The Grand Trunk, British-owned with head offices in Montreal, which until then had run from Portland, Maine, through Quebec and Ontario to its western terminus at Chicago, was more than anxious to get into the transcontinental carrying trade. The company entered into an arrangement with the Laurier government for the construction of a line, well to the north of the C.P.R., to start at North Bay and reach the Pacific at what is now the city of Prince Rupert. The government would build the line east from North Bay across northern Ontario and Quebec, crossing the St. Lawrence near Quebec City, and running east from there through central New Brunswick to tie on to the government-owned Intercolonial at Moncton, and reach the Atlantic at Halifax. The plan called for the government half of the new transcontinental route to be rented to the Grand Trunk Pacific, as it was called, and operated by them as a transcontinental line. Unfortunately, things did not work out financially as the promoters had hoped and in due course the whole system fell into financial difficulties, and later became part of today's Canadian National Railways.

Meanwhile, a third transcontinental was being put together under the aegis of two of the greatest promoters this country has ever known – the late, unrevered, and subsequently knighted William Mackenzie and Donald Mann. These two built their Canadian Northern Railway in bits and pieces, starting with a disjointed series of lines in the west. Yet before too much time had passed they had patched together a third transcontinental system in a country that was barely, if at all, capable of supporting two.

Mackenzie and Mann, naturally enough, were anxious to enter Montreal and proposed to do so by tunnelling through Mount Royal into the heart of the city. It may intrigue the reader to learn of the strange manner in which such deals were carried out in those halcyon days (and no doubt are in various fields today, even though we tend to assume that all the old 'robber barons' have moved on to greener pastures).

The year 1911 saw the beginning of the Canadian Northern's Mount Royal tunnel, a project undertaken in deep secrecy, the promoters' greatest obstacle being, not the engineering feat of digging through the mountain, but the buying up of the necessary real estate at either end, without arousing public suspicion and raising land prices.

Estimates of the enormous amounts that came from the 'slender' pocketbooks (filled with borrowed money) of Mackenzie and Mann for tunnel and terminal vary, and are unreliable. But the folklore surrounding them is intriguing. The planners of the project hired an agent, F. B. Shaw of Carrick Limited, to buy up land north of Mount Royal. His job was made easier by the fact that James Maher of Outremont

had bought options on a number of farms in the area with the idea of opening up a boulevard north of the mountain. The Canadian Northern agent, after some delay, persuaded the railway to allow him to buy up Maher's options. Within the day the options were in Shaw's pocket, and before another twenty-four hours had elapsed, Shaw, with two company men, three notaries, and a Montreal lawyer whose satchel contained $120,000 in hard cash, went round the area 'behind' Mount Royal, scattering largesse like royal princes to the various farmers. By 8.30 that night Shaw had not only closed the deal on all the optioned farms but had also bought up many acres of land adjoining farms already purchased. The flashing of greenbacks in front of the farmers encouraged the hesitant to strike while the iron was hot, and for days the people behind Mount Royal were in holiday spirits counting their solid cash.

Commercial and newspaper interests in Montreal heard of the land sales with suspicion. Headlines proclaimed 'Enormous Real Estate Purchases near Montreal', but no one suspected the Canadian Northern.

Getting hold of land in the heart of the city was more difficult, however. At first, it was proposed to buy property above St. Catherine Street, between City Councillors, Sherbrooke, and Aylmer streets, but the news leaked out and speculators forced the price of land sky-high. Therefore a new plan emerged from the fertile minds of the buyers, which was to acquire, instead, a site running north from Lagauchetière Street to Cathcart and from Mansfield Street on the west to a line east of Monique Street. A number of agents were engaged to buy up the required properties separately at the normal market rate. At first no one suspected that the pattern of purchases led to the Canadian Northern, especially as the railway interests kept up the pretence of being interested in the area above St. Catherine Street.

It was a little book left lying on a chair at the Bath Hotel that spilled the beans. Amid great secrecy, two engineers of the Canadian Northern were sent to Montreal to make plans for the new railway station. They stayed at the Bath Hotel, but no one could discover who they were, nor their business in Montreal, until one of the engineers committed the 'careless' error of leaving a notebook on a chair in the lobby. Curiosity got the better of a hotel clerk who glanced inside the cover and saw the words 'Canadian Northern Railway – Toronto'. In no time the rumour was rampant that 'Mackenzie and Mann' were in town. The newspapers soon confirmed that the haphazard purchases of the old Joseph family estate, the United Shoe Machinery Company, the Bath Hotel, the Thistle Terrace and Curling Rink, and the University Club were all for one purpose – a station-site and portal for the new Canadian Northern tunnel and railway. As events developed these guesses turned out to be

wrong. Beyond the tunnel, 'Model City', planned by the Canadian Northern, took shape (today's prosperous Town of Mount Royal). But vicissitudes lay ahead, of which more will be said later. Suffice it to say here that the 'Big Hole' at the Montreal end of the tunnel did not come into its own until the building of Central Station, long after Mackenzie and Mann and the Canadian Northern were gone, though not forgotten. Meanwhile those who had gone in for land speculation on the information based on tales from a 'misplaced' notebook found themselves stranded with land they did not want.

Laurier's troubles were not caused by a railway boom carried out ahead of its time, however, even assuming that most of it ought to have been carried out at all. Actually he met his comeuppance from an entirely different and, I think it is fair to say, unexpected quarter. During the early 1900s he had participated in conversations with the authorities in Washington with a view to establishing a reciprocal trade treaty between Canada and the United States. An agreement was reached and, in 1911, he called a general election on the issue of reciprocity. The Conservatives, under Robert Borden, at first could see no ground on which to fight what appeared to be so beneficial a trading proposal. Suddenly, one of Borden's 'shadow cabinet', Sir George Foster, hit on what turned out to be a brilliant countermove – the claim that this was an anti-British, anti-Empire move on Laurier's part. Within the week every Conservative platform in the country was draped with Union Jacks. The slogan 'Neither truck nor trade with the Yankees' was raised to the masthead. Unfortunately for Laurier, at this juncture an eminent American (many have credited the remark to President William Howard Taft) stated in a letter that somehow leaked to the public that 'Reciprocity would be the first step towards the annexation of Canada.' Overnight the issue became one of great patriotic excitement. The Union Jacks won. On election night, September 21, 1911, Laurier went down to ignominious defeat. Borden took 132 seats, Laurier only 86. Even Quebec broke ranks, the Liberals capturing only a few more seats than the Conservatives, in what has never been an imperialist-minded province.

So ended the Laurier era.

21 The Guns of August

On the fourth day of August in 1914 the thunder of German artillery rolled across Europe as Kaiser Wilhelm's army invaded Belgium. Britain and France, pledged to that small country's defence, immediately declared war, plunging Europe into a blood bath that would not be stopped until more than four years later.

Canada's entry was regarded by government and opposition, and by the average citizen, as virtually automatic. The Statute of Westminster, tantamount to a declaration of independence of action within the Commonwealth, was still almost two decades away. The *nature* of Canada's contribution was nevertheless her own. The government of the day, under Borden, opted for all-out military effort, with enlistment on a voluntary basis. In this it had the full support of Laurier's Liberal opposition, and of the people of the country generally. It is not the purpose of this book to tell stories of the feats of courage of Montreal-raised units, many of them already related in regimental histories and elsewhere, but to discuss the impact of World War I on Montreal itself. The contribution of the metropolis was outstanding. The first infantry battalion enlisted in Canada, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, was actually financed from the private purse of a wealthy Montrealer, Hamilton Gault. The daughter of the Governor General, His

Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, was proud to give the regiment her name. Its ranks filled almost overnight, largely with *emigré* Britons, men who could be called 'adventurers-in-a-hurry', and others who had seen service with the British army in other lands. Within a few weeks of war's beginning 'the Pats', at full strength, sailed for England, the first unit to leave Canada, to be brigaded at first with British troops and subsequently returned to the Canadian forces after the latter became a corps in their own right.

Meanwhile the Canadian government proceeded to the enlistment of its First Division and went on from there until, by the third year of the war, the young country had fielded four complete divisions, fighting under command of a Canadian, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie. In addition, all manner of ancillary units were raised. Canadians served in large numbers in non-Canadian forces, an item often overlooked by the statistically-minded. For example, before the termination of hostilities Canada provided more than half of the flying and fighting personnel of the Royal Flying Corps and its successor, the Royal Air Force. Others served in the Royal Navy, many others in the British Army. That it was a great contribution, outdone by none in terms of battle action, despite the number-counters, is simple truth. That Canadians of French and English extraction stood united as comrades in arms is a statement to which the writer can testify with pride from personal experience. A similar statement, unfortunately, was not to be true of the home front, despite the unity that prevailed when first the guns of August boomed. Good will between Canada's two founding ethnic groups was to be damaged almost beyond repair by that hated word 'conscription', that jagged rock of misunderstanding and stupidity in high places, on which it seemed (as had happened before in other circumstances) Canada itself might well founder.

When the war began, French and English Canada were almost unanimous in their enthusiasm to give full support to the two motherlands – France and England. In Montreal, *La Patrie* declared on the day hostilities began: 'There are no longer French Canadians and English Canadians. Only one race now exists, united by the closest bonds in a common cause.' This sentiment was echoed throughout the length and breadth of Quebec. The Catholic hierarchy in Montreal, led by Archbishop Bruchési, was unanimous in its expression of loyalty. Said the Archbishop: 'If troops have to be sent to the other side, our brave young men will not hesitate to face the ordeal, and I know that we will find in them the same heroism which characterized their forefathers so many years ago.' A few weeks later, when units of the First Division were leaving the city to undergo training at Valcartier, Archbishop

Bruchési blessed them, saying, 'England has protected our liberties and our faith. Under her flag we have found peace, and now in appreciation of what England has done, you go as French Canadians to do your utmost to keep the Union Jack flying in honour to the breeze.'

Not only the Catholic press of Quebec reiterated the Church's strong approval of Canada's participation in the war, but even the often vociferously anti-British nationalist newspapers, led by Henri Bourassa in his *Le Devoir* of Montreal, were temporarily dazzled by the spectacle of France and England fighting together, with sons of these two countries from across the Atlantic standing side by side. On August 29, 1914, Bourassa, to the astonishment of many, including a number of his closest supporters, threw his enormous prestige among his fellow Québécois to the war effort declaring, 'Without a doubt, it is natural for any Canadian to wish ardently for the triumph of Anglo-French arms.' Again on September 8, he enlarged on his view that it was Canada's duty to avoid internal party strife, though he was careful to assure his friends that he had not changed his opinion that Canada should not participate in British wars with which she had no connection, before proceeding to assert that Canada, as an Anglo-French nation, bound to both motherlands by ethnic, social, intellectual, and economic ties, had a vital interest in the maintenance of their prestige and power in the world.

In the early days of August, the streets of Montreal were thronged with crowds shouting 'Vive le Roi' and 'Vive la France', while Montreal French newspapers carried at their mastheads the intertwined flags of Britain and France. *La Patrie* splashed a huge headline, 'Vive la France et l'Angleterre et Dieu sauve le Roi'. Such Montreal French businessmen as Sir Rodolphe Forget asserted that French Canadians would show their deep appreciation of the civil and religious liberty accorded them within the British Empire by fighting in her defence. And, with Bourassa applauding, some of his own Nationalists were carried away by patriotic enthusiasm. Two, P. E. Lamarche and Alfred Sévigny, asserted it was the duty of every Canadian to defend the Empire. Within a few days of the declaration of war, 3,444 Montrealers had volunteered for service.

Montreal's largest French daily, *La Presse*, as early as August 7 had called for volunteers for overseas service and began a daily column devoted to news of the militia regiments and overseas recruiting stations; it told of the number of men enlisted, the horse presented to a popular colonel, and how Catholic soldiers said the rosary together. Only two Quebec newspapers, *Le Bien Publique* of Trois Rivières, and *l'Avenir du Nord* of St. Jérôme, expressed hesitation about sending troops abroad.

In the First Contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force men from Quebec were as eager to enlist as those from other parts of Canada. French-Canadian militia units were accepting large numbers of recruits daily, money was pouring in from Montreal's coffers to the Red Cross, for the relief of France and for the Canadian Patriotic Fund, while proposals were aired that a French-Canadian hospital staffed by French-Canadian doctors be established in France at the earliest possible moment. It was estimated that some 1,200 French Canadians were in the First Division of the Canadian Expeditionary Force when it sailed in a massive convoy on September 30, 1914, a force composed largely of British-born Canadians rather than 'native sons'. The Second Division was already recruiting in October 1914, and the ardour of English and French Canada was still united and fervent, although the possibility of long-drawn-out, static trench warfare was still unthought of. Proposals for an all-French-Canadian battalion were made, to overcome the difficulties inherent in having young French-speaking Canadians finding themselves assigned to predominantly English-speaking units, where the lack of French-speaking instructors obviously hampered their training. The Montreal physician Dr. Arthur Migneault and such other prominent French Canadians as Rodolphe Lemieux, J. Mathias Tellier, Captain Hercule Barré, and Senator Belcourt, were among those who actively supported the formation of what became the crack French-Canadian regiment – the Royal 22nd.

The formation of this totally French-language unit received enthusiastic Montreal support and greatly stimulated recruiting. *La Presse* devoted a daily column to news of the 22nd, with photographs of the officers and men splashed across its front page almost every day. The fervour of French Canada reached its zenith on October 15, two weeks after announcement of the formation of the Royal 22nd, when a monster recruiting meeting was held under the auspices of *La Presse* at Montreal's Parc Sohmer. Leaders of both political parties spoke to the crowd, estimated at between 15,000 and 20,000. Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke of the duty owed Canada's two mother countries and urged his compatriots to enlist, invoking the memory of Dollard and his sixteen companions who faced death and torture to deliver the original mission-colony, Ville Marie de Mont Réal, from threatened Indian attack. 'If there are still a few drops of the blood of Dollard and his companions in the veins of the Canadians who are present at this meeting, you will enlist in a body, for this cause is just as sacred as the one for which they gave their lives,' declared Laurier with deep emotion.

Laurier was followed by Sir Lomer Gouin, the Liberal prime minister of Quebec, who sat beside J. Mathias Tellier, leader of the Conserva-

tive opposition in the provincial Parliament, while beside Rodolphe Lemieux sat T. Chase Casgrain, another eminent Conservative, soon to be given a seat in the Borden cabinet. Said the Montreal *Gazette*: 'Even more signal than the appearance of the crowd was the unanimity of the sentiment expressed by the men who in politics are accustomed to express divergent views.' By November, the ranks of the 'Van Doos' were completely filled, to the universal satisfaction of Quebec. During the same month, the Duke of Connaught expressed his admiration for the aid given by the Roman Catholic Church in securing contributions to the Canadian Patriotic Fund, and the city's English-language press heaped praise on the French-Canadian people for their display of loyalty and patriotism. By the end of 1914 mutual good will between English Canadian and French Canadian seemed to have attained a new dimension. But in the background a harsh note was struck by Bourassa when he suggested in *Le Devoir* that, if the government did not succeed in raising the target of 300,000 volunteers, it would undoubtedly resort to compulsory enlistment – the first sour note of the war years, but, unfortunately, by no means the last.

Like most other Canadians, Montrealers had been caught off-guard by the suddenness of the war. Premier Sir Lomer Gouin was vacationing in Brittany, the Speaker of the legislature was in Berlin, the chief justice in Paris, while Bourassa himself was engaged in studying the bilingual problem in Alsace. In Montreal, French and Belgian reservists flocked to their consulates, escorted by crowds singing 'La Marseillaise', and on August 4 the first contingent of French reservists sailed from the city amid the cheers of enormous crowds. A committee to aid their families was set up with an outpouring of enthusiasm.

But the initial support of French Canada for the war effort was to show the first signs of strain during 1915. Foremost among the reasons for this cooling was the resentment felt in Quebec over the continuing French-language crisis in Ontario. The Ontario government in 1912 had adopted 'Regulation 17' which, while permitting the use of French in the first two years of schooling, decreed that it should only be used in the higher grades in cases or in communities where pupils did not understand English. Added to this were annoyances over the management of recruiting in Quebec as well as the tendency to give preference to English-Canadian officers and to have English as the sole language of command. The highest-ranking French-Canadian officer, Major-General F. L. Lessard, a veteran of the North West Rebellion and of the Boer War, was given the post of inspector-general for eastern Canada, rather than command of the First Division of the Canadian Expeditionary

Force, as his compatriots had hoped. Colonel Eugène Fiset remained deputy minister of militia, while only one French-Canadian officer headed a unit in the First Division – Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Panet of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery.

But a good deal of the cooling off in French Canada must be attributed to Henri Bourassa, who, after a brief flirtation with war enthusiasm, changed his view to one of bitter opposition. In August 1914, he had declared that 'Canada as an Anglo-French nation had a duty to contribute in the measure of her strength and by the means of action proper to her, to the triumph and above all to the endurance of the combined efforts of France and England.' But Bourassa had changed by the time of the giant recruiting meeting at Parc Sohmer to enlist volunteers for the Royal 22nd, and dismissed it as 'an explosion of empty and sterile chauvinism'. A year later, his tone had become even more acid. He wrote in *Le Devoir*

> Instead of making a gift, at one swoop, to very wealthy England of millions of bags of flour and great piles of cheese – which rot today on the docks of Liverpool because the English do not know what to do with it, while millions of Belgians starve and thousands of Canadians have scarcely enough to eat, [the government] could have organized with intelligence and method Canada's economic and agricultural production . . . they could have watched with care to prevent any cornering of food supplies; but no, it was necessary at all costs that Canada's aid should take an inflated, noisy, loud form, worthy of the fat-stomached newly rich who dominate high finance, big business and the high policy of the Canadian nation. It was necessary that it should profit above all the boodlers, vampires, the furnishers of bribes and electoral funds, the merchants of boots made of uncured cowhide and razors made in Germany. Glory to the Empire.

The impact of such censorious explosions was undoubtedly great throughout Quebec.

The slowing of enlistment provoked scorn and a whispering campaign in Ontario that the French Canadians were not doing their share in the war. This, combined with the continuing bitterness over Ontario's Regulation 17, deepened the rift. In the Quebec legislature at the opening of 1915 a Montreal member, Scottish-born J. T. Finnie, supported by a former Baptist preacher, W. S. Bullock of Shefford, introduced a motion reprimanding Ontario for its narrow stand on the French school issue, declaring, 'It is in the interests of the Dominion in general that all questions of this sort be considered on broad, generous, and patriotic

protest that the orders were rescinded and the unit sent to Saint Cloud near Paris. French Canadians who wished to transfer to the Royal 22nd Regiment, then the only totally French-Canadian infantry unit at the front, were refused permission, while French-Canadian drafts were taken from the newly formed 41st and 57th battalions to reinforce English-Canadian units. Particularly embittering to French-Canadian army leaders was the removal of Senator Landry's son from command of the 5th Brigade of the Second Division on the eve of its departure for France in September 1915, and his replacement by Colonel David Watson, a personal friend of Defence Minister Hughes, brought from the First Division. It was whispered that the replacement was Hughes's revenge on Senator Landry for his role in the Ontario school dispute. If so, it was typical of the violently ambivalent Hughes, who constantly allowed his Orange prejudices to influence his ministerial decisions.

Nevertheless, when Hughes returned from overseas in September 1915, he was tendered a civic reception in Quebec at which he paid tribute to the fighting spirit and qualities of French-Canadian soldiers. To add to the conciliatory atmosphere, he offered command of a proposed new battalion to Armand Lavergne, son of Laurier's good friends, Joseph and Emilie Lavergne of Arthabaska, who had embraced the nationalist views of the group headed by Olivar Asselin and Bourassa as early as 1900. Hughes's offer was rebuffed by Lavergne in an open letter to *Le Devoir*. In it he said, 'To accept your flattering offer and induce my compatriots to enlist for the present war would be to disavow myself, for which you, with your high sense of honour, would blame me.' Lavergne elaborated:

> I consider it unwise and even criminal to put Canada in danger for a war over which we have not had and will not have any control. . . . It is not for us to defend England, but for England to defend us. . . . I bring you another reason. My compatriots of French origin in Ontario, Canadians like you, are now undergoing a régime worse than that imposed by the Prussians in Alsace-Lorraine, because they do not wish to abandon their mother tongue.

Counteracting this to some degree was the formation in Montreal in September 1915 of the 'Citizens' Recruiting League' with a French branch including Senators Dandurand, David, Béique, Charles Beaubien, and L. T. Maréchal, and other outstanding members of Montreal's French-speaking community such as Hormisdas Laporte, N. K. Laflamme, and Edouard Fabre-Surveyer. At Longueuil in late September, Lieutenant-Colonel Hercule Barré, newly returned from overseas to recruit a battalion, urged his compatriots, 'Don't sit around here and

criticize. . . . Get out and do something yourself. Remember that Britain is at war, Canada is at war, and you, you are at war.'

With the slowing down of French-Canadian enthusiasm, highlighted by the dramatic refusal of Armand Lavergne to recruit a battalion, those in Quebec who supported the war redoubled their efforts to clear Quebec's name in the sight of other Canadians. T. Chase Casgrain, the sixty-three-year-old Postmaster General, offered his military services; other French-Canadian cabinet ministers undertook speaking tours. The Church hierarchy continued its efforts to support the government, but the majority of the lower clergy had been converted to the anti-war stand of Bourassa. The entire Liberal high command, including Laurier, addressed a meeting in Montreal's Monument National in December 1915, urging support of the war effort. Laurier disputed the idea that Canada should defend only her own soil. He foresaw the day when 'those soldiers of both races who had mingled their blood on the battlefield . . . would surely do justice to their companions in arms'. During the same month, Bourassa also spoke at the Monument National but in a far different tone, declaring that Canada had no military obligations outside its own territory. Subsequently he published a pamphlet which asked 'What do we owe England?' This publication again brought Bourassa under bitter attack, not only in Quebec from those who took up arms, but especially in Ontario where the press demanded his prosecution. Even the principal of McGill University, Sir William Peterson, accused the author of sowing disunion and hindering recruiting. Countering this, the Nationalist argument against support of the war received a jolt when Olivar Asselin, the youthful journalist who was one of the prime movers in La Ligue Nationaliste, decided to enlist. Asselin, who had been one of Bourassa's chief supporters, said he respected Armand Lavergne's stand against the war, but declared, 'If I wish to go, it is because I should rather die than see France conquered and powerless.' Asselin was immediately authorized to recruit a battalion, the 163rd, but refused the colonelcy offered by Hughes. He took the rank of major and secured command for Henri Desrosiers. In a powerful speech at the Monument National in January 1916, Asselin answered his critics within the Nationalist camp. As early as October 1914 he had attempted to enlist in the French Army; failing that, he sought to secure an administrative post to replace a soldier and on several occasions had tried to get a job as interpreter with the Royal 22nd or any other unit – British, Canadian, or French. He said he still condemned the government's policy, but agreed with the right of the individual Canadian to serve voluntarily. Yet he went on to enumerate the grievances of his compatriots. Ninety per cent of the French Cana-

dians of military age, he said, could not hope for advancement in the army because English was the only language of command, and even the higher ranks of French-Canadian units were often barred to them. He went on to criticize the fact that so few decorations had been given to the 8,000 French Canadians already serving overseas, and said he did not believe the Ontario attitude towards the French language would change if French Canada furnished more battalions. Lastly, he proclaimed his disapproval of the pro-war attitude of the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy.

Simultaneously with Asselin's new battalion, four other Quebec units were authorized – the 167th, to be raised by Lieutenant-Colonel Onésime Readman of Lévis; the 189th, under Lieutenant-Colonel P. A. Piuze, to be recruited along the lower St. Lawrence; the 206th under Lieutenant-Colonel Tancrède Pagnuelo of Montreal; and the 230th under Lieutenant-Colonel René de Salaberry of Hull. In Quebec City, Sir William Price, with the aid of Onesiphore Talbot and Thomas Vien, undertook to raise a mixed French-English battalion, the 171st, while two other Montreal units were ordered – the 148th, to be raised by Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Magee, and the 199th (Irish Canadian Rangers), to be raised by Lieutenant-Colonel H. J. Trihey. Recruiting was slow and none of these battalions ever reached its full strength. Later, in England, they were broken up to provide reinforcements for infantry units in France.

Again Archbishop Bruchési of Montreal urged French Canadians to greater efforts, assuring them, 'There has not been conscription, there is still no question of it in the country, and I hope there never will be a question of it.' The Archbishop continued: 'You *must* enlist, it is your sacred duty to participate in this war.' This plea was answered in an insolent manner by Armand Lavergne, who proclaimed his readiness to be 'thrown into gaol tomorrow', saying he knew he spoke treason when he said that 'there are worse than Germans at our very gates . . . I am not afraid to become a German subject . . . might not the German régime be favourably compared with that of the Boches of Ontario?' Such words, widely published outside Quebec, were hardly likely to strengthen the country's united effort.

Meanwhile the school dispute in Ontario deepened. Protest meetings were organized in Ottawa, where the *curés* refused to appeal for contributions to the Patriotic Fund on the grounds that their parishioners' savings were being exhausted to keep their own schools going. In Montreal Armand Lavergne suggested that, instead of the city's contributing to the Patriotic Fund, it should contribute to the Ontario French schools. The city's school commissioners were authorized to send a donation of

$5,000 to their 'beleaguered compatriots' in Ontario, the victims of Regulation 17. Bourassa, whose arrest was demanded by Orange members of the federal Parliament, as was the suppression of his paper, began a new series of lectures entitled 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow' in which he suggested a defensive alliance with the United States, which he considered would be less expensive than the British connection. One is bound to wonder how ethnic reactions in Canada would have fared if only the extremists in both camps had held their tongues and Ontario had expunged Regulation 17 from the record.

With the grave situation caused by heavy Canadian losses at Ypres and on near-by battlefields in 1915 and early 1916, coupled with the continuing decline of enlistment, Brigadier General James Mason presented to Parliament early in March 1916 a statistical breakdown of the recruiting situation. Out of a possible 1,500,000 Canadian men of military age some 249,000 had enlisted, and of these 63 per cent were British-born, 30 per cent were Canadian-born, and the remaining 7 per cent were foreign-born. The brigadier general was even more relentless. He broke down his figures to show that, of the 30 per cent Canadian-born, he estimated that 85,000 were English-speaking, while only 12,000 were French-speaking, although French Canadians represented 40 per cent of the population of military age. Mason pointed out that neither the English- nor the French-speaking native-born men of military age were doing their full share with regard to recruiting, and he urged a program of national registration. Putting the problem bluntly, he stated: 'There can be no question that the additional 250,000 [men needed] to bring our quota up to 500,000, and a further 300,000 if required, annually, to keep it at that figure, will not be obtained under the present system of enlistment.'

It was the first warning call of the troubles to come and a prophecy (though not put into direct words) of the deep divisions that were to split the Canadian household in bitter domestic strife.

During the remainder of 1916, the French-Canadian enlistment problem seemed inextricably tied to the Ontario school issue, so much so that even the moderate Archbishop Bruchési of Montreal compared the Franco-Ontario resistance to Regulation 17 to French resistance on the Marne. In Montreal, Dr. Finnie again urged a settlement favourable to the French in Ontario, while W. S. Bullock proposed suspension of the 'odious' Regulation. The language question reached a climax, finally, when Ernest Lapointe brought it before the House of Commons in the form of a motion 'that this House . . . respectfully suggests to the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario the wisdom of making it clear that the privilege of the children of French parentage of being

taught in their mother tongue be not interfered with.' The debate opened May 10 and lasted through another day, despite Borden's attempt to sidetrack it. Liberal and Conservative members from Ontario were agreed and declared that Regulation 17 was 'untouchable', education being a matter of purely provincial concern under the constitution. Laurier made an outstanding plea on behalf of his compatriots, appealing to Ontario's 'British' sense of fair play. He appealed in vain. Laurier agreed that 'every child in the province of Ontario should have the benefit of an English education' and went further, saying, 'No man on this continent is equipped for the battle of life unless he has an English education . . . but, sir, when I ask that we should also have the benefit of a French education . . . is that an unnatural demand?' His answer was rejection. Lapointe's motion was lost 107 to 60. Eight Quebec Conservatives nevertheless supported Lapointe.

On top of this defeat for the Franco-Ontarians, a papal encyclical published in October left the decision of the school questions 'to the bishops, and particularly to those who preside over dioceses where the struggle is most ardent'. The encyclical urged calmness and unity among Catholics while awaiting the decision of the Privy Council, to which the Franco-Ontarians had appealed when it confirmed Regulation 17. The Vatican virtually disavowed the powers of the new school commission set up by the Ontario government and Ontario's claim that the encyclical left 'room for manoeuvre'. Nevertheless, Rome still stood for moderation and obedience to the law. Monsignor Pâquet pointed out that, although the papal injunction urged avoidance of discord among the faithful, it did not preclude efforts to defend the French language.

In June 1916 the enlistment figures had dropped to half of the April peak. By December the figure was half of even that of June. Of the 250,000 men sought, only 120,000 were raised between January and June 1916, and from June to December the enlistment figure was a mere 40,000. The new French-Canadian units never reached their complement. Although Olivar Asselin's 163rd Battalion had only reached two-thirds of its authorized strength, it was sent to Bermuda on garrison duty (much to the annoyance of its commander and men) because its numbers appeared to be 'frozen' at the two-thirds mark. Other French-Canadian units were disrupted by official 'raids', for drafts for other units. In turn, they were reinforced by drafts from English-speaking units and thus 'mongrelized'. The problem of desertion from the ranks became general, and the court-martial and dismissal of Lieutenant-Colonel Pagnuelo of the 206th Battalion dramatized the developing difficulty. When trouble broke out at Valcartier in July, a number of officers of Pagnuelo's battalion were dismissed. To the battalion, Colonel

Pagnuelo said, 'It is a revenge because we are French Canadians . . . As far as you are concerned, they are shipping you to Bermuda, where you will undergo hardship and suffer misery from the heat. Now, military law prevents me from speaking, but if you are wise enough to read between the lines you will know what to do. I will issue passes to everybody, and be sure that the little money that your friends have subscribed to the regimental fund will not be used to run after those who will not come back.' After such a speech, it was hardly necessary to read between the lines, nor did such sentiments lessen the desertion rate. Retribution came quickly to the rebellious commanding officer.

From Ontario and English Canadians at large came demands for conscription, while Quebec leaders, fearing the consequences of such a move, continued their efforts to persuade Quebec men to come forward voluntarily. From the front another grandson of Papineau appealed to his fellow Québécois to assist the land of their forefathers. Captain Talbot Papineau wrote an open letter to his cousin, Bourassa, which was published in many English and French newspapers in Quebec and Ontario. Captain Papineau, in forceful style, appealed to Bourassa, whose influence on French Canadians he feared, saying, 'By the time you are within fifteen yards of the German army and know yourself to be holding about one yard out of a line of five hundred miles or more, you are liable to be enquiring very anxiously about the presence and power of British and French forces.' Young Papineau went through the various arguments of the nationalists – their reliance on 'American protection' in the event of attack – and he spoke of the new bonds of unity springing up between French and English Canadians as they fought side by side on French battlefields.

After first casting doubt on the authenticity of Papineau's letter, Bourassa set out to demolish Papineau's arguments one by one, first attempting to destroy even his claim to speak as a French Canadian, saying that Papineau, even though he bore a French name, was separated from French Canadians by religion, mother tongue, and upbringing. Papineau had acknowledged that he was not, like Bourassa, *un pur sang* since part of his family was English and he himself had been educated in Oxford and Paris. Bourassa said it was absurd to speak of fighting for the 'preservation of French civilization in Europe while endeavouring to destroy it in America', and avowed what he maintained was his people's 'dislike of active participation in the war'. To many non-French Canadians the slowdown in enlistment proved Bourassa's assessment right. There were an increasing number of ugly incidents, breaking up recruiting rallies. At Place d'Armes in Montreal in August a crowd supported L. N. J. Pagé in breaking up a rally be-

cause, as Pagé rightly claimed, recruiting sergeants of the Irish-Canadian Rangers had used insulting language. The next day, another crowd forced the military to retreat from their recruiting station on Montreal's Place d'Armes. The hour of internal crisis was drawing closer.

In September came news of the severe losses in the French-Canadian crack battalion, the Royal 22nd, which lost a third of its men at Courcelette in leading an attack with great courage. Another third of the Royal 22nd was lost less than a month later at Regina Trench. Other French-Canadian units were sent to England – Barré's 150th and Piuze's 189th sailed for England in September and became depot battalions for the 22nd, and Asselin's 163rd was at last removed from Bermuda to England, while the unruly 206th Battalion was broken up and its remaining members distributed through the continuing units.

By December 1916, the government had resolved to undertake national registration, declaring its sole purpose to be to identify those most capable of war-industry work. A meeting in Montreal to explain the purpose of registration, at which Borden spoke, was disrupted by hecklers who caused considerable disorder, while Montreal students did not hestitate to tear down recruiting posters. Yet even this hostility was in at least some degree offset by the impressive tribute paid to the dead of the Royal 22nd at Notre Dame Church, in Montreal, when all the Montreal regiments paraded to the Church to hear Archbishop Bruchési proclaim with dignity that 'Quebec has done its duty.'

National registration was carried out in January 1917. By June the government's overriding consideration was the ratio of casualties to enlistments during those first five months of the year, during which some 56,863 Canadians died or suffered wounds while only 37,580 men were added to the service lists throughout the country. In May Borden announced reluctantly that the need for reinforcements was forcing the government to consider the selective conscription of 50,000 to 100,000 men. Rumours persisted that large numbers of young men were crossing the New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario borders into the United States to avoid the pressure to enlist. By this time Laurier, like other responsible leaders, is said to have been convinced that there was no alternative to enforced service to halt the outflow to the United States, on the one hand, and to keep the ranks of units overseas adequately reinforced, on the other.

The reaction to impending conscription was immediate. French-language newspapers supporting the government, especially *La Patrie* in Montreal and *l'Evénement* in Quebec city, accepted it. *La Presse* urged a referendum and *Le Canada* of Montreal attacked the government for going back on its word. In Montreal a mob attacked the offices

of *La Patrie*, breaking windows and shouting 'Down with conscription', while on the following night *La Presse* was also attacked. Mass meetings were held in the city, and, on May 23, on Champs de Mars and in Parc Lafontaine. Two nights later in Quebec, a mob, after listening to a fiery speech by Armand Lavergne, smashed the windows of the *Chronicle* and *l'Evénement*. By May 28, *Le Devoir* was sufficiently disturbed by the swing to violence to urge French Canadians to listen to the voices of their religious leaders and oppose conscription, but in a calm, disciplined fashion. Bourassa even went so far as to confess that he would have favoured a policy of selective conscription at the outset of the war. Yet he went on to call attention to Borden's and Laurier's pledges of 1916 that there would be no conscription, and warned that 'Everything in the application of compulsory service – however impartial it may appear to be – will tend to irritate the French Canadians, and generally all Canadians who are Canadian before all.'

When Laurier took an awkward position regarding Borden's Military Service Act, moving that a referendum be held, the ensuing debate in the House of Commons led to such acrimony that E. L. Patenaude resigned, leaving Alfred Sévigny as the only French-Canadian representative in the federal cabinet. Deputy-speaker Joseph Rainville and Dr. Pâquet, government whip for Quebec, also resigned with Patenaude. French-Canadian members never before heard in Parliament raised their voices to support Laurier against conscription. Even Médéric Martin, Montreal's mayor, entered the lists by warning that, if conscription were adopted, it would mean the end of Confederation, and civil war. Laurier continued to oppose the bill, which was passed by 104 votes to 44 on July 24, 1917. A few days later, General Mason again supplied his recruitment figures – but, of a total of 424,456, Ontario had supplied 184,645 and Quebec 46,777, with English Canadians constituting 40.2 per cent of the men overseas and French Canadians 4.5 per cent.

Conscription was now law. English Canadians gradually united in their support of compulsory enlistment. In Quebec, with the exception of *La Patrie* and *l'Evénement*, the French-Canadian press was opposed. *La Presse*, failing to secure a referendum, now pushed for a general election as a means of soothing racial feelings, while *Le Canada* hysterically proclaimed that the government had 'condemned 100,000 young Canadians to death'.

What has to be borne in mind in what is still thought of as the 'conscription' election of 1917 is that, prior to embracing the 'press gang' issue, all was far from sweetness and light within the Borden government and certainly with its standing in the country. It had failed miser-

ably to create any controls over the national economy and consumer prices, thereby enabling various financial groups virtually to corner the supply of basic commodities (sugar is one case in point) and run prices to astronomical heights for the times. The Ross rifle, with which the Canadian army had been equipped, although an exceptional instrument in its accuracy for marksmen on the practice range, was, if not useless, at least dangerously inefficient in a war being fought in the mud of Flanders. Its exposed working parts caused it to clog with mud and become useless to the soldier in the trenches, and it may be blamed indirectly for many casualties to men whose weapons of retaliation were rendered useless in the conditions of war in northern France and Belgium. In order to correct this appalling condition, Canada had been forced to turn to the British Lee-Enfield in order to re-equip its forces in the field.

These were by no means the only charges that the Liberals were able to levy against the Borden administration. Profiteering had been rampant in army contracts – in boots, uniforms, underwear, and all manner of equipment. The name of Robert Rogers, Manitoba's representative in the cabinet, stood high on the list of those who had approved, if not engineered, much of this 'contract boodling', as the Liberals called it. The wild talk in which the defence minister, Sir Sam Hughes, repeatedly engaged, coupled with his bitter pro-Orange antipathy towards French Canada and the atmosphere of irresponsibility he repeatedly created, had made him, like Rogers, a heavy liability to the government of the day. Had elections been held in, say, late 1916 (the government had been granted an extension of life by unanimous consent of Parliament), the result might have been far different. The well-organized Grits not only had to hand the direct war issues mentioned above, but such other political dynamite as the government's purchase of Mackenzie and Mann's bankrupt Canadian Northern Railway, at a price the Liberals held no man should pay for a ruined concern, plus the deal to take over the Quebec and Saguenay from its creditors, including the Canadian Bank of Commerce, to which it was deeply indebted. These and other politically scandalous 'deals' gave Laurier's Liberals ample ammunition with which to fight and probably to defeat the Bordenites.

In the spring of 1917 Borden realized that within six months he must go to the country. The government did what it could to mend its badly damaged fences. Rogers was dropped. Hughes was replaced at Defence by the efficient General S. C. Mewburn. An effort was made to control prices, though it was not very effective. A small income tax was imposed which barely touched the general public. Reports from the country, however, indicated that in all but a few areas outside Quebec feeling

was strongly in favour of enforced service for overseas. Borden rushed to embrace it. The objection of the farming community was met by the writing in of exemptions for agricultural workers, especially farmers and their sons of military age. At this stage the well oiled Liberal machine began to come apart, as one by one its strongest Ontario, western, and maritime leaders began to 'hear from home'. Borden suggested formation of a Union government. Many leading English-speaking Liberals promptly accepted, deserting the old warrior, Laurier, and leaving him with no more than a rump of supporters in the English-speaking provinces. On December 17, 1917, the general election took place, with conscription as its central issue, and all scandals forgotten by the voting rank and file in the semi-hysteria of the war fever. When the count was completed a Union government had been returned, with Borden at its head, with 153 seats, only 3 of which had come from Quebec. The Laurier Liberals held 82, of which all but 20 came from Quebec, where Unionists won only 3 of 65 seats.

The remaining Liberals shouted from the rooftops that the election had been gerrymandered, through the trick that permitted the votes of men overseas to be placed numerically 'where they were most needed', in ridings where the government's candidates were trailing. Stories were circulated, not without reason, of ministers and others telephoning returning headquarters with urgent requests for, say, five hundred soldier votes for the Union side. Be all this as it may, the conscriptionists had won power and the right to call up men and put them in uniform. Tragically, the result virtually isolated Quebec and a majority of Montrealers from the mainstream of Canadian life, primarily as a result of hysteria and prejudice on both embittered sides. The virus of the repetitive Canadian malaria had attacked again, as so often before and since.

In Montreal the election rallies of Conservatives Herbert Ames, H. C. Ballantyne, and C. J. Doherty had been broken up by rioting mobs, while the two French-Canadian government supporters, Albert Sévigny and P. E. Blondin, were both rejected by Montrealers, leaving French Canada virtually unrepresented in the new Union government. Said Bourassa, 'French Canadians resisted *en masse* because they are *en masse* and by instinct Nationalist.' At the Montreal branch of Laval University (now the University of Montreal) the young Abbé Groulx was making his influence felt on the side of the Nationalist revolt, warning that Confederation was a danger to French-Canadian religion and national existence, while, on the other hand, Charles Ernest Gault thundered that Montreal would secede if Quebec separated from the rest of the Dominion, and that tariff barriers would be ruinous to the

province. Gault felt that Ontario's hostility was based on the misapprehension that the Catholic Church was not favourable to the Allies, and he urged that this false impression be erased.

Bitterness in Quebec increased during the early part of 1918. Abbé Groulx continued his attacks on the treatment of Franco-Ontarians, while *La Presse* answered Ontario's query as to what Quebec wanted in this way: 'To wit, that the French language should be similarly treated in all parts of the country, because it has rights acquired in virtue of treaties and of the Constitution', that they should 'treat our people as brothers, that is to say, as the Anglo-Protestant minority of Quebec is treated by the French; and that there should be an end to the belief that national unity can be secured only by unity of language; that the law of the strongest should no longer be enforced against us.' Gault's demand to have the Church hierarchy cleared of anti-war sympathies came at an awkward time, for the introduction of conscription had placed a severe strain on the Church, which hitherto had been unshaken in its support of the war effort, even though the lower clergy had responded to Bourassa's arguments. Now the Church hierarchy, annoyed that theological students had not been exempted from the draft, and for other reasons, began to indicate its disapproval. Archbishop Bruchési told Borden that he did not believe that further recruiting would yield good results, and articles began appearing in Church-supported magazines indicating the shift in the higher clergy's attitude. Even Abbé d'Amours, whose writings had consistently supported the war effort, was criticized by Archbishop Bruchési for writing in a Montreal journal 'without first obtaining the permission necessary for a priest of another diocese'. By early 1918, *l'Action Catholique* of Quebec was open in its opposition to conscription, but urged French Canadians to submit cheerfully to the law. By the end of February 1918 conscription had rounded up some 22,000 men of whom 2,000 were from Quebec.

But resistance to conscription was certainly not confined to Quebec. Western farmers and Ontario rural workers had been equally vocal in their claims for exemption, and by May the government began to take a more conciliatory attitude towards Quebec. The formation of an exclusively French-Canadian brigade, which had been urged by Quebec members, was agreed to, and endeavours were made to reinforce Quebec units with French Canadians. The visit of General Mewburn to Quebec and Montreal, where he assured Quebecers that he never for a moment doubted Quebec's loyalty and that he would strive to keep French Canadians together in distinct units commanded by officers of their own race and tongue, helped at least to create a little good will –

too little, too late. By the middle of 1918, when Laval University took the lead in a recruiting campaign, Montreal had supplied an additional 9,970 men. Quebec's new willingness to co-operate was remarked even by its old enemy, the Toronto *Mail and Empire*, which commented on the way in which young men were answering the call to duty.

When the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, the Canadian Corps of English- and French-speaking soldiers had seen almost continuous action since August 8, when the Allied breakthrough at Amiens marked the beginning of 'the last hundred days' leading to Allied victory. The Royal 22nd had been steadily in the forefront of this fighting; at one point every one of its officers had been a casualty. Two of its members were to win the Victoria Cross. The 'English battalions' had borne at least an equal brunt. French and English Canadians alike had been in the thick of the fighting ever since 1915. When the troops returned, all were received triumphantly in Quebec and Montreal, and the ties formed at the front between French and English soldiers in some degree helped overcome the divisions that had erupted on the home front during the war years. Yet much bitterness remained, as capital for extremists in both ethnic camps in the decades ahead. As Canada's greatest city, Montreal has always been the focal point and the victim of these recurrent crises – crises in which the average citizen, French- or English-speaking, has played little if any part.

22 The Montreal of Médéric Martin

The year 1914 brought two events with particular impact for Montreal and its people. One was the beginning of World War I, the 'war to make the world safe for democracy' or the 'war to end all wars' – neither of which purposes it achieved. The second was the opening of an era of colourful, at times even antic, mayors – highly individualistic men who defied all the rules of organized politics and, with the first of them, fractured permanently what may be termed the gentlemen's agreement under which the mayoralty of Montreal had, with rare exceptions, alternated between French- and English-speaking incumbents.

Médéric Martin not only fractured this process single-handedly, and for the first time in several decades; he did so permanently, with most of the serried hosts of French-Canadian civic leaders and the provincial Liberal administration aligned against him. For these and other reasons, Martin's sudden and melodramatic appearance on the mayoralty scene marks a turning-point in the history of the affairs of the metropolis.

Although by no means new to politics (he had become a Montreal alderman in 1906, and in the same year Liberal Member of Parliament for Montreal–Ste. Marie), his performance in Ottawa had been that of any loyal backbench supporter of the great French-Canadian Prime Minister, Laurier. Not so his deportment as a city alderman during the

same period. At one stage he incurred considerable public criticism for his activities at City Hall, where he had been named to head the city's Incineration Committee. While acting in this capacity Martin had given instructions to the city's works superintendent to use his horses and wagons to carry and dump loads of ashes at the former's summer home at Laval des Rapides.

The city records note that four single teams of horses worked four and a half days hauling ashes to the alderman's property, this at a cost to the city of $3.00 *per diem*. An opponent, running across this item, raised the question of its propriety in Council and secured appointment of a special committee to examine this use, or misuse, of civic property. The result was a 'mild censuring' of the young alderman for falling into 'an error of judgment'. It was perhaps a sign of the Martin-to-be that he rejected a city bill of $13.50 covering four and a half days of work, with the shoulder-shrugging retort that 'whether the horses hauled ashes to my house or not, the city would have been obliged to pay the same money for their keep and whatever they did.' But if this was an indication of the future behaviour of the man who would soon be mayor of Montreal, nothing in the record suggests that his opponents spotted this quirk in his nature.

The man who was to give an entirely new flavour to Montreal's mayoralty, and wreck precedents by the score in doing so, was born on January 22, 1869, to Solomon Martin and his wife, Virginia. He had a normal enough boyhood, which included brief attendance at St. Eustache College. His father then apprenticed him to the cigar-making firm whose subsequent head, the Honourable Raoul Grothé, soon became the young man's political mentor, a role that was to continue until Martin's final departure from the political scene two decades later. Meanwhile, the young Martin became a master of his trade, an expert in the rolling of cigars, and a member of the International Union of Cigar Makers – a status he would later use with pride, often producing his union card at political rallies, ostensibly to prove that he had always been and would always be the friend and supporter of the working man. Meanwhile, Grothé was working hard at bringing his young protégé along in preparation for a career in civic politics, the meteoric nature of which would surprise even the politically minded Grothé. Yet neither his most serious enemy nor his most ardent supporter could have foreseen the technique that the garrulous Médéric would select as basic for his mayoralty campaign. But politics pays off solely on winners – and that Médéric Martin certainly was.

In 1914, it should have been the English turn to occupy the mayoral chair. Leaders of the business and professional worlds in each language

group had persuaded the reluctant and wealthy Major George Washington Stephens, scion and head of a wealthy Establishment family, to accept the nomination, which he and his friends regarded as tantamount to election. Mr. Stephens had overlooked the dynamic Martin, whose regard for unwritten rules was negligible. Simply on the basis of available evidence, Stephens and his friends should have known better. Twice this maverick Liberal had been elected to the House of Commons from an east-end working-class constituency, Ste. Marie. Each time he had done so, though nominally a Liberal, without respect for any of the recognized political credos (although he behaved 'regularly' enough in the House, where for a term he was the seat-mate of another tyro, a man named Mackenzie King). Martin was now about to throw discretion to the wind, and the rule book out the window, in pursuit of Montreal's mayoralty.

His opponent, in fact, would even supply the fabulous Médéric with the platforms from which the latter made his appeals for votes – Stephens's own public meetings. What follows is a brief look at Médéric the Mercurial as he conducted his first campaign for Montreal's mayoralty. His mentor, Grothé, is said to have been among those who advised caution. But Médéric was determined.

Picture a tall, gangling man waving his arms in the gestures of oratory. 'If you are out of a job and hungry, what will happen to you?' he asks the crowded hall. 'I will tell you. If my opponent is elected and you go to his house, you will see a butler in uniform who will ask for your card. You have no card, but tell the butler your name and why you want to see the Mayor. He tells you that the Mayor is dining with friends and cannot be bothered like this.'

The lanky Demosthenes pauses, drains a tumbler of water, assumes a confidential pose, and continues: 'But when I am Mayor and you want a job, you come to my house. I answer the door myself. I have no butler. We sit down together and smoke. You tell me what you want, and *voilà*! – it is arranged. If I am not at home you are greeted by my wife, who understands difficulties because she married a working man. She brings them to me when I come home to sleep. And Madame Martin, she never travels!'

Thus Monsieur Martin, as he crashed the gate of his opponent's halls, clambering up platforms paid for with the good, hard cash of another man's campaign fund, running away with meetings summoned to extol the high qualities of Major George Washington Stephens, a candidate with every newspaper backing him, an enthusiastic organization – and no dollar worries. But Médéric, in rough-shod glee, rode away with the election, hoisting himself bodily to the First Citizen's chair from the

platforms of his opponent, spending his nights in flights of oratory that followed one-man raids on the halls where Stephens held forth with the dignity of a man of wealth seeking to serve his city – paying for the hall, but still too much the gentleman to deny his opponent a hearing.

Some wag nicknamed Médéric 'The Cuckoo', a little bird with a nest-robbing complex. That was Médéric Martin, crashing the City Hall gate in happy, pre-war 1914. He boasted for the rest of his days that it costs next to nothing to be elected – provided a fellow knows his way about and keeps an eye on his opponents' speaking dates. But not all politicians, then or now, are Martins.

Stephens and his friends should have been forewarned. But early in 1914, when Martin modestly predicted that he would be Montreal's next mayor, the politically sapient emitted vulgar guffaws. And, while the Solons laughed, the *haut monde*, incredulous at the idea of a rollicking cigar-maker turned demagogue as mayor, inquired, 'Who is this fellow Martin?'

But, as nomination day approached, the great, cumbersome 'vox pop', which does the bulk of mayor-choosing in any city, was cheering Médéric on as he strode like a joyful giant through the aisles of other people's meetings, mounting their platforms to capture the masses with his wit, his satire, his rapier thrusts, and his occasional bursts of pathos.

At the City Hall, as nominations closed and the *assemblée contradictoire*, where candidates debated the issues, began (an old Quebec custom which television has driven into limbo, more's the pity), Stephens with graceful gesture urged that Mr. Martin be given first chance to air his views. Médéric bowed, but declined the offer with sweeping thanks. Major Stephens took the rostrum and in well-turned phrase remarked that he deemed it a great honour to be nominated a candidate for mayor of his native city. 'I am delighted my opponent feels honoured by the nomination,' cried the barnstorming orator in high glee, 'for nomination is the only honour he will get.'

A backward look at the civic elections of 1914 reveals reasons for the victory that Martin never doubted for a moment he would win. That he was committing a compound fracture of the gentlemen's agreement, under which French-speaking and English-speaking chief magistrates alternated in the mayoral chair, did not faze him for a moment. As one English-language newspaper put it, succinctly: 'If you place a man in nomination whose nationality is that of the majority and oppose him with a man of the minority, and then abuse the majority representative in all the minority newspapers, the majority candidate is apt to be elected.'

Truer words were never written. Stephens was supported by every

English-language newspaper in town and by all the important French-language journals. The *Star* described the mayoralty job as that of figurehead, handed to a man who could do nothing with a weak and often corrupt City Council and a Board of Control which had started well, some years earlier, but had been emasculated in the intervening period. Said the *Star*: 'Four years ago a great battle was fought to better the government of the city of Montreal. The charter was amended by the Legislature at the behest of the Citizens' Association to establish a Board of Control which was to curtail the patronage and corruption rampant under the old machine. A good start was made. The barefaced robbery was stopped, but for the past two months efforts [have been] made to select a new Board of Control [opposed to the original slate].' Martin wanted no part of any super controlling body over the mayor and council. On the hustings his argument throughout the campaign was that the people of the city should run it through their elected representatives, chief of whom should be the mayor.

The election was held on April 6, 1914. When the votes had been tabulated, the ubiquitous Martin had received 40,733 ballots; Stephens 35,169. So began the real career of Médéric Martin, professional politician *par excellence*. And so began a new era in the civic politics of Montreal.

No sooner was the new man installed in the mayoral seat than he called in the heads of all civic departments and demanded complete reports on the present status of their departments and the funds on hand. They were told to 'get the work done quickly. Take on all the day-labour you can – go ahead and spend money. Employ fathers of families irrespective of race or creed before employing young men of eighteen or nineteen. Take the men who pay taxes – the citizens of Montreal.' His slogan of 'a job for every man in Montreal who will work' brought the out-of-work flocking to town from all over Canada.

Martin's hustings-announced determination to oppose and to do away with the Board of Control carried him outside the law. Early in his first tenure he called a vote in Council in defiance of an interim court injunction restraining him from adopting a project for a new tramways franchise that favoured the owners who had supported his campaign. He was fined $100 for contempt of court.

Martin had been one of the famous, or infamous, aldermen who had carried through City Council a series of contracts at high prices to contractors who were favoured by the roads committee (including some who had filed the highest tenders). He continued to assure similar successes to his political associates. The new mayor was off to a flying start.

For the next decade the maverick mayor of Montreal rode rough-shod over precedent and custom alike. Lucrative city contracts went to His Worship's friends and cronies, and to corporations, especially those involved in doing business with the city, without thought of cost or often of even calling for tenders. During his campaign for re-election in 1916, the weekly *Le Pays*, never a pro-Martin paper, published a lengthy list of donors to Médéric's campaign fund, including names and amounts subscribed. It was a list that would have embarrassed most candidates for office, and it certainly must have embarrassed many of the donors. It was shown to Martin by a reporter from the newspaper, prior to publication. The candidate shrugged off the allegedly 'incriminating' list with the wisecrack: 'Tell the citizens of Montreal that as soon as they wish to subscribe another present for me, I am willing to receive it.' So for his first two years in office he broke every precedent in the book. Strangely, having retained his seat in the federal election of 1911 when the Laurier government went down to defeat on the reciprocity issue, Martin remained a singularly peaceful and 'regular' follower of his federal leader. What mattered to Médéric was Montreal, not Ottawa.

The civic election campaign of 1916 brought out the old argument of the alternation agreement (between French-speaking and English-speaking mayors). From Martin's point of view the presence of a second candidate of French origin, named Lapointe, could have had serious results in splitting the French vote, thereby electing the English-speaking candidate, Duncan Macdonald. Martin's organizers were deeply concerned. Not so Médéric. He simply took to the hustings and without equivocation called on his listeners not to 'split the French vote and thereby elect an Englishman'. When the tally was counted, Martin was back into City Hall with over 33,000 votes, 10,000 more than Macdonald received. Lapointe had piled up the respectable total of 16,576. Thus Martin was re-elected by only a plurality, not by the majority for which he had called as a vote of confidence. Nevertheless he continued to run his home city as if it were his personal property, yet to behave with docile propriety as a member of the Liberal opposition in Ottawa.

The role he played during the difficult years of World War I was at least ambivalent. In its early days he followed approximately the position taken by leading churchmen, the French and English business communities, and the press in general – one of whole-hearted support for the voluntary war effort. Even when Henri Bourassa and others began to fulminate against Canadian participation in 'foreign wars', or to claim that Canada's responsibilities began and ended with the defence of its own terrain, Martin remained what may reasonably be termed pro-war and an enlistment supporter. Not, in fact, until Prime Minister

Borden sought to prolong by two years the normal life of the Parliament elected in 1911 did Martin come out with any strong statement. Even in this his personal ambivalence was plainly exposed. For example: in 1917, when the anti-conscription issue was beginning to wax warm, and public talk outside Quebec became more and more conscriptionist, Martin called a demonstration at Fletcher's Field on July 16, 1917, to protest against the federal government's request for an extension of the life of Parliament for two years 'because of the war'. Parliament itself was prepared to give unanimous consent. But Martin attacked the federal government, presenting a resolution that appealed to the imperial government in London against the action of the Dominion Parliament. Martin said that 'all possible aid should be given to the Allies, but it should not be forced.' He also claimed that there were available in England 3,500,000 soldiers, and that 'it was not reasonable that Canadians should be forcibly enrolled to allow 3,500,000 conscripts of England to remain at home.' But in calmer vein he asked the crowd not to be 'tumultuous or to destroy property' and ended with a shout of 'Three Cheers for the King'.

Martin's admittedly moderate speech was overshadowed by that of Alphonse Verville, a Liberal-Labour M.P. Verville charged that 'there were many Canadian soldiers kept in England, so that their physical condition would not be known in Canada.' 'It is not so,' came the shouted reply from Lieutenant-Colonel I. P. Rexford, formerly in command of the 87th Battalion, Canadian Grenadier Guards, who was present in the crowd, wearing civilian clothes. Stones were thrown at Rexford and at a soldier in Highland uniform, and when the police attempted to get them safely into a Park Avenue streetcar, Verville urged the crowd to chase them. However, the twelve policemen on duty kept back the crowd and Rexford and the soldier escaped. It was during this meeting that Martin read to the crowd a telegram signed by C. L. Henderson of Brantford, Ontario, who called himself an 'Irish-Canadian'. Henderson congratulated the Mayor 'on his firm stand against conscription and upon the freedom of the press in the province of Quebec as compared with the censored press of Prussian-ruled Ontario. No wonder Ireland demands a republic since home rule in Canada has been made a mockery by order in council. The voice of the people must be expressed at the polls since they are denied the freedom of the press. If Canada is to remain within the Empire, Ontario, like Quebec, is against conscription. The masses, not the classes, must rule.' Yet, though anti-conscriptionist, Martin always managed to appease the conscriptionists, as witness his call for cheers for the King at this selfsame rally.

In the 1918 civic election, Martin was opposed by the labour leader

Joseph Ainey who had fought so hard with Herbert Ames in 1908–9 in the Citizens' Association campaign to get the new Board of Control. Martin won over Ainey with a majority of 7,270 votes, his greatest majority down to that time. But even in this election the cry of scandal had been raised against Médéric. On March 30, *Le Canada* had editorialized with these harsh words:

> Left muddled by five very scandalous affairs, condemned and censured by eighteen magistrates, M. Martin is unworthy of being mayor. Other individuals whom justice has chased have not so foul a *dossier* as Mr. Mayor. To re-elect Mr. Mayor would signify that a man was able with impunity to defy justice and commit the worst abuses. This *dossier* of the career of M. Martin ought to make the taxpayers open their eyes before they go to cast their votes. Violation of rules, circumventing the courts, embezzlement, abuse of power, with all this has M. Martin been reproached by the most eminent judges of Montreal.
>
> Friday evening, M. Martin boasted of having within a month spoken to 37 meetings of electors and never has he breathed a word about all the scandals which have sullied his administration. Our mayor has had recourse to manoeuvres so odious and so low in order to pursue his campaign that it will not be a surprise to him to see *Le Canada* telling him the truth and nothing but the truth by offering proof to prove that he is unworthy of being mayor.

The handwriting was on the wall for Martin as early as 1918, despite his huge majority. But the end was not yet to be.

The 1921 election was fought mainly on the issue of the proposed new Charter Commission, which would do away with the thirty-five wards in favour of three big districts of administration. Martin opposed the Charter Commission plan; he was re-elected hands down. His opponent was Luc Rochefort who got 22,900 votes to Martin's 53,024. The basic issue in the election was taxation, as is so often the case. But this did not interest the working-class majority; his flamboyant personality carried Martin through again.

In 1923 Martin wrote a letter to the Montreal *Star* in which he discussed the city's taxation problems. He recalled that the real estate tax had been $1 per $100 of municipal evaluation until 1918 when the Administration Commission had voted an increase of thirty-five cents per $100. In 1921 the provincial government had replaced the previous system of administration with a council of thirty-five aldermen and a mayor, five of the aldermen to form an Executive Managerial Committee, with the Mayor sitting *ex officio*. The new Executive Committee had recommended that the rate of assessment be raised from $1.35 per

$100 to $1.50. Martin vigorously opposed any increase in property tax. The city deficit that year was $900,000, a picayune figure by today's standards. But Martin had claimed that the prosperity of the city would mean an increase in revenue, which would mean that the deficit could be met without raising the property tax. He said his prediction had proven true, that the 1923 budget exceeded by nearly a million dollars that of 1922, and the 1924 increase was $1,597,727. He may have been right, but the charm was wearing thin.

In 1924 Martin was swept from office by Charles Duquette, the president and general manager of the Alliance Nationale, a mutual insurance society. Duquette, like Martin, was a native of Montreal. Born on July 25, 1869, and educated at St. Henri College, he had made his commercial debut in the shoe business. From 1901, he was associated with the Alliance Nationale and was also prominent in the St. Jean Baptiste Society. Duquette, in short, represented everything that Martin was not – the small 'c' conservative, respectable, even dull, man of affairs. Moreover, for the first time the breath of scandal had seriously touched the personality of the public's hero.

Martin had made the mistake 'safe' politicians so often make, thereby bringing about their own downfall. In the 1918 election the main plank of his platform had been criticism of a number of members of the Liberal provincial administration, headed by Sir Lomer Gouin. He had said that they had participated in acquiring, through a double-shuffle purchase and quick sale at a big profit, a huge tract of land which became Maisonneuve Park (roughly the area where the city's Botanical Gardens now stand). Huge sums were alleged to have been pocketed by political insiders in Quebec and Montreal prior to Martin's first election. Médéric had undertaken to 'drive the money-changers from the temple', presumably on Grande Allée in Quebec. After winning the election he promptly fell silent about the 'scandal' of the park.

A year later, the Mayor of Montreal was appointed by Gouin to a life tenure seat in the province's Legislative Council. By strange coincidence nothing further was heard from the Mayor about Maisonneuve Park. But by 1924 the opposition against him had built up to major proportions. Martin started to explain. His appointment to the provincial upper house had been made on his qualifications alone, he declared; it had no connection with any attacks he had made on the government of the day at Quebec. But when he said it his audiences jeered. He was at a disadvantage in any case. By this time the Liberal organization had moved into his camp – but the Grits were in trouble themselves. A tidal wave began to billow through the island of Montreal that boded ill for Médéric. Liberalism, for the nonce, was unpopular in

its greatest stronghold. The electorate was swinging across the fence, where the colourful figure of E. L. Patenaude wooed and won the mass mind, as he gaily hurled grenade and bomb into the ranks of the party – once led by Gouin, but now led by Louis Alexandre Taschereau. Médéric went on the stump. Patenaude drew him on. And, one peaceful Sunday afternoon, in the political hotbed of St. Laurent, he flayed the Mayor as no man had done before, tearing off his skin, strip by strip, and left him for dead by the roadside.

It was the habit of the Mayor's friends to lead the throng into the stirring swing of 'Il a gagné ses épaulettes!' when Médéric mounted the platform. But the effort that day fell flat. Instead, the crowd that packed the college chanted the 'Dead March' as Martin rose. The handwriting was on the wall. Of a sudden, Montreal decided Martin should go – egged on by Patenaude, who kept asking, 'What became of the money-changers?' The question was asked from the hustings. It was asked in editorials, in songs, and in newspaper cartoons. It was asked so insistently that the Patenaude candidate, the dull, respectable Duquette, romped into City Hall while Médéric went his way.

Martin was even abandoned in his firmest stronghold, Maisonneuve, and was swamped in English-speaking Notre Dame de Grâce. According to Martin, 'I never saw so much corruption' during an election. 'The proof was in the number of arrests,' he said, and went on to say that he had visited a number of polls and was 'stupefied to see how the location of the polls was arranged. There were even women acting as secretaries to returning officers. I never heard of that before.'

Duquette got 43,395 votes to Martin's 40,231, while a third candidate, Henri Petit, got only 1,406. It was a close call at that. For some time Martin sulked and talked about public ingratitude 'for a lifetime of service'. Meanwhile he had his non-elective lifetime seat in the provincial Legislative Council and its emoluments, scarcely enough to satisfy such a man for long. Two years later his name was again in nomination for the mayoralty.

In the 1926 campaign, which swept him back into office, Martin accented his campaign with the slogan 'No more English Mayors here'. He warned that 'French Canadians must stick together . . . in Westmount and Montreal West, you know what happens, and I don't blame the English. They are in the majority. I do not mean we should be unjust to the English, the Italians, the Jews, or others of the minority . . . but the mayoralty must remain with the French Canadians.' So it has from that day to this.

During the federal campaign of 1925, a monster demonstration was held at the Forum in Montreal, Prime Minister Mackenzie King being

the principal speaker of the evening. But at twenty minutes past eight, when the electorate was jamming the big rink to the rafters, a peculiar thing happened. It started as a murmur, deep in the back of the auditorium. Gradually the murmur swelled. Soon it became a roar of 'Médéric! Médéric! Médéric!' as down the aisle swept the frock-coated figure of what to then had been generally considered Montreal's deadest political corpse. 'Médéric! Médéric! Médéric!' The huge crowd roared its greetings until the roof cracked. On strode the debonair dead man, bowing, smiling, waving in greeting to people who a few short months before had chased him into the political wilderness.

The fellow on my right nudged me. 'There goes the next mayor of Montreal, damn his eyes,' he growled. He was right. Martin's long strides sang the song as they swung him down the aisle; Médéric had regained his epaulettes. A year later he was back on the mayoral dais.

The answer lay in the fact that Médéric, instinctively, had the common touch. The mass mind was his mind. He read the emotions of the man in the street. He never forgot for a moment that the electorate is composed of nine parts artisans, mill-workers, truck-drivers, postmen, mechanics – the working folk who do most of the voting and electing. Before them he stood as a romantic figure, as one of themselves who had made his mark, but remained one of them. True, he might wear a silk hat, but under his official robes he was still a dues-paying cigar-maker. In the face of such a barrage, the intelligentsia could shoot their popguns as they would. To the masses of ordinary voters the achievements of Médéric had become a saga. He was the living example of the fairy tale of the humble boy who grew to walk with the mighty.

To Médéric the fanfare had become angel's food and the vivas of the crowd nectar. When the Queen of Romania came to Montreal, it was the Mayor who greeted her as she stepped from her train, who rode beside her in state through the city streets. His Worship's topper dipped as the populace hurrahed them on their way. From the City Hall to the pavement, red carpet streaked the stairs, and awnings sheltered Royalty from the vulgar gaze, as the city's beauty and political chivalry gathered to offer homage. Cameras clicked. The newsreel men ground their handles, shooting miles of celluloid of the Mayor and Royalty. Médéric, in the centre of every group, was a happy schoolboy, glutting himself with the lollipops of acclaim. Beside him Marie basked in his reflected glory. (The simple truth was that the lady had come to North America to try to borrow money to save a corrupt and tottering government which soon fell. What did such things matter, either to Médéric or to the crowds on the sidewalks?)

He even drove Her Majesty to the summit of Mount Royal in the

mayoral limousine, an unheard-of piece of cheek, since the mountain always (until then) had been the sacred preserve of horse-drawn carriages. Médéric grinned as he cheerfully paid the $100 fine the courts imposed on him. 'Aha! Aha!' chortled the wiseacres in glee. 'It's going to his head! Wait till the boys down in St. Mary's get him on the hustings and remind him of this! This will kill him!'

Not Médéric Martin! Tell His Worship that and he would take the platform to expound that the people, to do the job right, must entertain the public's guests for the public, as the public would have them entertained: better a Médéric as the city's interlocutor than to see visiting royalty spirited away to some mansion on the mountain slopes, hidden from the masses who foot the bills. The public, nobody else, should be entitled to the front seat! Médéric, one might remark, with the one exception of Maisonneuve Park, certainly knew his politics.

When the Prince of Wales paid Montreal a visit in 1919, the heir to the throne and His Worship split the spotlight, fifty-fifty. A lot of muttering was heard, the burden of which was that Médéric was a public disgrace. But the people who called the dirty names were standing on the sidewalk to have a look at the Prince, while Médéric was riding in the same carriage! And 'E.P.' was enjoying Médéric at least as much as Médéric enjoyed 'E.P.' ('E.P.', for Edward the Prince, was the nickname given by the people to that gracious but ill-starred future monarch.) *Lèse-majesté* though it may have been, that charming young man could not have ventured into the jungles of the mayoral bailiwick in the hands of a better sponsor than Médéric the Great. The Mayor and the Prince of Wales quickly became buddies. When they parted, Médéric the Cigar-Maker presented His Royal Highness with a box of cigars rolled by his own two hands in the Grothé factory. In reply, the Prince peeled off his gloves and handed them as a gift to Médéric. Not bad for a humble cigar-maker! In fact Médéric cabled Montreal's felicitations to His Royal Highness every now and then, being sure to send verbatim copies to the public prints. Generally they made the front page (of course, with the Prince's warm, friendly answers).

Whether he was riding the streets with the heir to the British throne, or driving at the side of a charming alien queen, it was always election day to the Mayor of Montreal. As he marched along Sherbrooke Street in the van of the St. Jean Baptiste parade, his thoughts would turn to ballot boxes and his mind's eye would be vote-counting the crowds along the route of march. When he took to the hustings in this provincial candidate's behalf or for that federal nominee, it was the Mayor of Montreal who exhorted the multitude, still the Médéric who let the other fellow hire the hall, while he, Martin, took the meeting home in

his pocket, with nothing much but an orator's flair and a fingertip sense of what the public wanted to hear.

But the great man was slipping and, as he slipped, his people began to see the feet of clay. Although he regained power at City Hall in 1926 his days were numbered. The climax came with a deal to purchase a privately owned water company which supplied a great part of the population. Acquisition by the city made sense. But did the price, in which more responsible elements of the populace could smell the unpleasant drama of politics in its more unpleasant aspects? Had the promoters not bought 'for a song', but sold for millions?

Many aldermen were clamouring for investigation before purchase. Newspapers were shrieking from the housetops. Semi-public bodies were urging a go-slow policy. Hardly an hour passed in which some public-spirited citizen or organization did not hurl a new *caveat* in the front door of the City Hall. But His Worship shrugged his shoulders and banged his gavel. He was under promise to put through the water purchase, he said, because it spelled one thing, and only one: cheaper water in the working-class wards served by the Montreal Water and Power Company. It was rammed through the council under the mayoral gavel. But just as his earlier failure 'to drive the money-changers out' had caught up with him, so water would soon float him out of office for good. At least on leaving office he still had his life seat in the provincial Legislative Council! Politics had been good to the cigar-maker from the old Grothé plant on the corner of Ontario and 'the Main'.

There were other, more serious aspects of the role Médéric played in the city's affairs, notably during the years of World War I. Here Médéric Martin has been considered solely as a political phenomenon – a reflection of the city of his time, as on other occasions a Curley reflected Boston-in-transit, and a Walker (and before him a Hylan) New York. New York had its La Guardia, too – and in time Montreal would find its own La Guardia.

Meanwhile 1928 had come – and the end of the road for Médéric Martin, not defeated, as in 1926, by a silent, deadly serious man of affairs, but by an even more flamboyant *gaillard*-figure, the amazing Camillien Houde.

23 The Montreal of Camillien Houde

It was perhaps an intriguing coincidence that the man who accomplished the ultimate defeat of Médéric Martin as mayor of Montreal should have been not only a political unknown, but another man of in many ways the same political stripe – the everlasting, individualistic political maverick. Probably those who supported Camillien Houde in his trial run did not recognize the condition. They were simply *contra* Médéric and would have done anything in their power to encompass the defeat of the ultra-individualistic, come-from-nowhere incumbent who had dominated Montreal's civic politics for so long without doing much of record for the city itself – although, as there was reason to suspect, he had contrived to do a great deal for himself.

So what of his successor, the man named Camillien Houde, who was to dominate the public life of the metropolis for many years to come? What manner of man was this? To those of similar birth, background, and instinct, Houde was no doubt an understandable character, but to the citizen of different background he remained an enigma whose motives became more and more difficult to understand as the years went by.

One fact remains clear. When Houde decided to oppose Le Grand Médéric (a kind of 1920s version of Charles de Gaulle) the new candi-

date was flat broke. He had not always been. He had been a surprise victor in the 1923 provincial elections in Montreal–Ste. Marie (but Montreal was up in arms against the Taschereau régime at the time as a result of a highly repressive act of legislation, and therefore the Conservative opposition carried thirteen of the city's seats). He had been manager of a biscuit factory which went broke, then of a candy factory which did not do well either. He had been a branch bank manager and an insurance agent – and to top off the record of failure and semi-failure he lost his seat in Ste. Marie in 1927. By that time, the record says, he did not have a dollar to his name. The furniture of his Logan Avenue flat was under bailiff's seizure. One might truthfully say that he had nowhere to go but up. *Ergo*, he decided to go up, and the record of how he went is, to say the least, intriguing. Scarcely a record of success, but his determination was unquenchable.

His first decision was to run against Martin, whom he regarded as a combination of buffoon and self-serving politician, and, as such, vulnerable. Here one is forced to rely on the mythology of the time, so much of which remains unprovable. But, as the story goes, on the day Camillien filed his nomination papers to oppose Martin for the mayoralty, as soon as he had paid his borrowed deposit he took a walk to the office of the Montreal *Star* (whose proprietor, Lord Atholstan, regarded Martin as a menace to the civic well-being) and sought his aid in the fight against Médéric. Atholstan welcomed him with open arms – and Camillien left with a generous campaign cheque. The story has since been enshrined in local political mythology. What is not myth, however, is the fact that the story came to me from William Little, who was Lord Atholstan's Man Friday and can be presumed to have known whereof he spoke, because, as he subsequently related, he was present in Atholstan's inner sanctum when the deal was struck.

It was in many respects a bizarre campaign. The incumbent, Martin, travelled from hustings to hustings accompanied by a heavy bodyguard 'to protect him from the tougher elements of the town'. Camillien, on the other hand, travelled about alone, attired in suits that had certainly seen better days, and he boasted that, unlike his frock-coated opponent, he had no funds to spend on an expensive wardrobe. And when the votes were counted on the night of April 2, 1928, Houde was mayor-elect of Montreal, defeating the five-times mayor by almost 20,000 votes – 58,175 to 37,482. Houde had gained his greatest successes in the English-speaking wards, where the big expenditure for purchase of the Montreal Water and Power Company (and, especially, the aroma of the deal itself) had been the major issue of the campaign. But it was certainly not the English-speaking vote alone that had given Médéric

his ultimate electoral comeuppance. Nor did English-speaking Montreal realize that in choosing Houde over Martin it had simply exchanged one tiger for another. That realization would not come for another dozen years.

On the day after the election, the Montreal *Star* summed up the public verdict in these terms: Houde had 'fought a clean fight'. His victory was 'a protest against the methods and manoeuvres which have besmirched our civic honor and brought the fair name of Montreal into ill-repute. [The issue] was a question of whether Tammany methods and all their corrupting and corroding influences shall be the dominating factor in our city's government. In the "Water Deal" citizens feared that overt influences were endeavoring to filch millions of dollars from the ratepayers in one of the grossest scandals of our municipal history.' But the mayoralty alone was not enough to attract this active, huge (in terms of weight) man with the proboscis of a Cyrano de Bergerac (a role he had once played in amateur theatricals without benefit of putty). In a provincial by-election held in his former stronghold of Montreal–Ste. Marie, he contested the seat held by Montreal Alderman Lapointe and defeated him by a majority of 772. He was back in provincial politics for all he was worth, vowing to work with all his might to bring about the defeat of the Liberal régime which had held power through several decades.

In December 1928, when Houde was in his first year in the mayoralty, the Conservatives of Montreal tendered the newly returned legislator a bumper banquet, reputedly attended by 5,000 diners. In his address to the gathering, Houde was quoted as saying: 'It is not customary to make any comment when drinking the health of the King, but allow me to say at this critical time, it will be with particular earnestness that we rise to drink to the health of His Majesty, asking the huge audience to remain standing for a full minute in silence and prayer for the King's recovery.' Such items are worthy of passing note, especially in the light of things to come.

A few months later Arthur Sauvé retired as leader of the provincial Conservative Party. He was succeeded by Camillien Houde. The manner of Houde's thinking during this era of his political activity is perhaps best explained by reference to a speech he made to the Canadian Club of Morrisburg, Ontario, shortly after becoming leader of the Quebec Conservatives:

> You people mostly originated in Great Britain or Ireland or else your fathers and grandfathers did. You are naturally attached to British institutions. But the French Canadian, whose family never had any direct connection with Great Britain, British institutions, or the

> British Crown is today a little more loyal to the flag than some thoroughbred Englishmen are. Because you have taken the British flag for granted for centuries, whereas my people have learned by personal experience what it is worth to them, and would not give it up for any dream of momentary prosperity or success. . . . There are enough of us all through Canada with individual minds feeling that way about British institutions to be able to make up the minds of those who have no minds of their own. . . . The Canadian mind will cease to be Canadian if [Canada] becomes a part of the United States. . . . There is a greater danger because of the greater proximity. Both prohibition and petting parties have been given a fair trial in this Dominion of Canada; neither of them imported from sturdy Great Britain, nor from that beautiful land which we French Canadians look upon as our original motherland.

Houde also complained that 'Canadian publications cannot compete with publications that come across the border with circulations running to seven figures; consequently, United States publications are read in a dozen places to every one where a Canadian publication is read. The moving picture is almost exclusively U.S. The few British films have been highly acclaimed, but there are not nearly enough to keep the picture houses busy. The English and French dramatic and operatic companies that come to Canada are much appreciated, but again they are not numerous enough.' The whole tenor of Houde's Morrisburg speech, in fact, was that he did not want British or French influence in Canada to be replaced by 'American'. His whole call was for the need to develop a 'Canadian soul'; that was the Houde of 1929.

Before examining Houde's forays into provincial politics, it is advisable to examine the nature of the mayoralty Houde had captured from Martin. The latter, no doubt, had literally 'run' City Hall. In 1928, Houde found himself 'the people's choice', but a mayor almost without power to act. The president of the city executive (a Martin man) was still the true source of power. Houde decided the time had come for a change, and many of the aldermen believed the course of wisdom was to support him. It has often been said that the present (1969) incumbent, Jean Drapeau, is the first head of party government in Montreal. But, between 1928 and his second election in 1930, Houde at least came close to the establishment of party government – and the party, of course, was dominated by a certain Camillien Houde.

The new grouping lasted only two years, until Camillien's first defeat at the polls. The reasons for that defeat are not explicable in simple terms. Many of those who voted against him did so because he paid too little attention to city business, spent too much of his time playing the

social lion. His involvement with provincial affairs no doubt impelled the powerful Montreal Liberal machine to make the defeat of Houde the *sine qua non* of its affairs. That extremely bad blood had developed between Premier Taschereau and the new Conservative leader is evident by even the briefest examination of the press of the day and of their many acid exchanges. Moreover, the Liberals had the wit to choose an exceptional candidate in the Honourable Fernand Rinfret, a former federal minister who had never been involved in provincial or municipal affairs, a man without a blot on his political escutcheon. Whatever the reason, in the 1932 mayoralty elections Houde found himself out of a job, and Fernand Rinfret moved into City Hall with a majority in excess of twenty thousand votes.

Houde, a vain if companionable man, wondered what had hit him. Old friends say he did not know what to make of what had happened. In fact, the man appears to have been so baffled by events that he decided to abandon his role in provincial affairs too, convinced (though only briefly) that neither Montreal nor Quebec wanted any part of him. If it were possible to set down a moment at which the first great personality change came over Camillien Houde, at least the beginning of it was in the year 1932, when friends say he took the vow never again to present himself as a political candidate. But two years later he was back on the mayoral dais!

In the charges he made at the time of his resignation from the provincial post, among others was the blunt statement that the English newspapers had been anything but fair to his leadership and that he could not carry on when his own party was riven by schism. A fairer estimate would have been to say that the real opposition within the party came from an ambitious young man named Maurice Duplessis, who entertained ambitions that went much further than the provincial leadership of a semi-defunct political party.

There is at least some truth in the story that, when a provincial leadership convention was called to meet in Sherbrooke in 1933, Houde remained behind in Montreal anticipating a draft. If this is so, then Houde completely misjudged the wiliness of Maurice Duplessis, for the 'Draft Houde' call never came – and Duplessis became provincial Conservative leader on the first ballot, which he won handily from Onésime Gagnon. So ended Camillien Houde's association with the Conservative Party of Quebec – and so began the era of one of the most remarkable men in Canadian history, Maurice Duplessis.

Meanwhile Houde, breathing vengeance, vowed that 'Quebec will never be big enough to house Maurice Duplessis and myself!' It was not Houde's most accurate prophecy.

The rise of Maurice Duplessis nevertheless has a direct bearing on the subsequent career of Camillien Houde. Duplessis clearly knew that the hopes, for a straight Conservative, of becoming Premier of Quebec were, at best, negligible. But he also knew of the many dissatisfactions that rent the reigning Taschereau Liberals. There were even breakaways, under Paul Gouin, a son of the former Premier, Sir Lomer Gouin. The dissident Liberals had formed themselves into a new group, known as l'Action Libérale Nationale. They included, publicly and privately, a considerable number of experienced and senior Liberals. Duplessis set about wooing them. In the provincial election of 1935 (in which the two groups did not field candidates against each other) they came within an ace of bringing the government down. A firm deal quickly followed, which, incidentally, completely ignored Paul Gouin, who had proved himself to be an almost total political innocent. A year later Duplessis, abandoning the Conservative Party name, took over the leadership of the newly born Union Nationale, despite the fact that his former Conservative group had captured only sixteen seats, as against twenty-six for l'Action Libérale, in the 1935 election. Though leader of a minority in the coalition he had founded, Duplessis understood power. Gouin did not. When Taschereau resigned under fire, his budget blockaded, Duplessis was swept into office in 1936, winning seventy-six seats as against a mere fourteen for the once powerful Liberals. So began the running feud between Duplessis and Houde which was to last for several years, with Duplessis the repeated victor.

In April 1934, Houde had won back the mayoralty, polling 88,953 votes against his nearest opponent, Dr. Anatole Plante, who scored only 35,673. The new City Council had thirteen known Houde supporters, ten antis, and twelve neutrals or doubtfuls. Not as strong a council as the returning Mayor could have wished! Still he weathered the gale.

During the 1930–9 depression years, the funded debt of the city rose to $270 million, an increase of about $107 million in one brief decade. During this period, Houde spent about $50 million in direct relief and another $40 million in public works, and imposed a personal income tax (10 per cent of the federal tax) and a 2 per cent sales tax. He called the latter tax a 'form of charity paid by the public at large for the benefit of the destitute and the unemployed'.

As the time for elections for the mayor's seat again drew near in 1936, Houde found himself buffeted by the winds of change. He appealed to the working class for support, and the left wing pinned their hopes on him, circulating a pamphlet urging people to vote for Houde. Once his keen supporter, the *Gazette* was particularly vicious; it called Houde the perfect example of a demagogue – 'one who obtains money from

the rich and votes from the poor by promising to protect each from the other'.

Then, three months before the mayoralty election, Houde suddenly sent his resignation to City Clerk Etienne Gauthier. He said he had made up his mind to resign the night of the election that swept the party of his arch-foe, Duplessis, into power in Quebec. Houde said that 'many spokes had been put into his administration wheels' and he warned that 'a change of régime loomed ahead' and that 'this question of French against English is coming to a head'. The *Star* maintained that Houde resigned as Mayor of Montreal in order to give Duplessis a free hand, that Duplessis was bitterly antagonistic to him, and that Duplessis had promised to abolish the sales tax, without which the Mayor could not see how the city's finances could be kept on an even keel. Houde added that the arrival of Duplessis as head of the Quebec government signified 'the secession of Quebec Province from the Confederation before very long'.

Houde warned that associated with the Union Nationale there was a nationalist movement which he considered 'very dangerous for the province, and especially for the French-Canadian people, but it is useless to try to show the people the foolishness of this nationalist movement in the present state of the public mind'.

In recapitulating his career as mayor, Houde claimed that when he first took office funds were exhausted; there was a deficit of $7 million, plus loans and overdrafts totalling $30 million on which the banks were demanding payment; landlords were threatening to evict unemployed tenants; nearly $3 million was owing to merchants for food supplied to the jobless. All this, Houde insisted, had been paid off by his régime. Houde then said: 'In a year we had paid off the banks, reduced the rate on borrowing by nearly 2 per cent, paid the merchants approximately $3 million, cleared all rentals in arrears, and re-established Montreal's credit on the world market.' He continued:

> In 1934 I undertook to settle economic and municipal problems. . . . I had not promised to undertake the rehabilitation of my race. Ever since April 1934, there has been growing in the Province of Quebec a spirit of intense nationalism which complicated the situation gravely. I have taken no part in the movement, which I consider dangerous, particularly in a cosmopolitan city like ours. Those who are out to fight me all belong to that school of thought, and the last provincial election makes it plain the trend is in that direction. In August it was absolutely clear to me that it was impossible to keep the hands of Quebec off Montreal.

In replying to charges that he collaborated with the members of the

former Liberal government, Houde said he did so in an effort to get the best he could for Montreal. Of the Duplessis phenomenon, he went on: 'Any man who dares to oppose the nationalism which is rampant in French Canada . . . not only risks defeat, but will very probably not be given a hearing in public meetings. I feel I cannot follow [the new leaders] onto grounds which lead straight to the secession of Quebec from Confederation. . . . No one, during my term of office, has been without food or shelter, to my knowledge.' Thus spoke the Houde of the mid 1930s!

When Duplessis was asked to comment on Houde's resignation speech, he declined, saying he had been too busy to read it.

Despite his premature resignation, when the new mayoral vote was held in December 1936 Houde was back in competition, though he lost to Adhémar Raynault, a minor businessman. On leaving City Hall, Houde said, 'It is not adieu, but au revoir, bowing out of office with a promise to return.' Houde said he left the city administration stabilized, that his defeat had been an honourable one. 'If another crisis should loom, and the people of Montreal come to me again, I shall again try to be of service.'

On that note Houde decided to try his luck in the federal field.

In January 1938, he filed papers for the forthcoming by-election in the Montreal riding of St. Henri, describing himself as 'a strictly independent candidate'. In his first federal campaign speech, he said he would run on an 'anti-armament platform' and claimed that the federal government's policy was dangerous and would lead to war. 'If the administration continues its program of armaments, it will drive Quebec to complete independence.' He lost his bid to enter federal politics in the January 17 election. But the spots of the leopard were beginning to change! This was certainly not the Houde of 1928 or 1932.

On December 12, 1938, Houde was again elected mayor of Montreal with a majority of 20,612. His total vote was 83,481.

In 1939, Houde made a speech at the Young Men's Supper Club of the Y.M.C.A. in which he spoke of the French Canadians as 'fascist by blood', declaring that they would never fight against Italians. He said the French Canadians follow one leader, and named as examples Papineau, Laurier, Bourassa, and Lapointe.

In February 1939, Houde and the City Council refused the use of municipal halls to 'either rightist or leftist groups'. (This decision was made when the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion veterans returned from Spain and were denied the use of the Atwater Market.) A month later Houde asked Canadians to declare their views on conscription in the event of a war. In an address on the Champs de Mars, speaking mostly

to students of the University of Montreal, Houde asked for a declaration 'in order to reassure youths and parents'. He said the youth of Quebec would shed its blood 'when Canada is attacked, but never in a foreign war'.

Yet when, in May 1939, King George and Queen Elizabeth were guests of the city, its mayor could not have been more of the patriotic proconsul. True, Houde seriously embarrassed the protocol experts in Ottawa by insisting that as mayor of Montreal and host to the royal couple he should ride next in the line behind Their Majesties during the royal procession. Houde said he was not going 'to take the dust of three [including that of the Prime Minister, Mackenzie King] or four or five haughty federal cars'. He delivered an ultimatum to Ottawa – 'second place or not at all' – and gave Ottawa three hours to consider it. Houde won his point, to Ottawa's barely concealed chagrin, thereby putting the mayors of other cities in second place in the royal processions when their turns came. Patriot? On the surface, yes. Yet, in effect, he appeared to be losing his pro-British Canadianism.

In New York, in 1940, Houde suggested a defensive alliance between Canada and the United States saying 'Canada is ready to fight for the Monroe Doctrine, applied along practical lines.' Regarding the financial plight of Montreal (its bonded debt by now had passed $270 million and the city had defaulted on a $7,500,000 bond issue), Houde blamed the financial imbroglio on the 'dilatory attitude of the provincial and and federal governments towards unemployment'. When Montreal defaulted, the city was placed under the Quebec Municipal Commission, and it did not regain financial autonomy until March 1944 – still another reason for the bitterness of the Houde-Duplessis feud!

In 1940, Houde had flirted with the provincial Liberals under Godbout and had even spoken in the interests of Colonel Thomas Vien, Liberal candidate for Outremont in the federal elections.

Getting into hot water continuously in the spring of 1940, Houde addressed the Fifth Canadian Youth Congress which met in Montreal with 197 delegates, of whom 97 were French. The national organizer was Kenneth Woodsworth of Toronto; also attending was David Lewis, then of the Commonwealth Youth Movement of Ottawa. Montreal's main representative was Mel Doig. A report was read in French by co-chairman Laurier Renier concerning the Congress questionnaire, of which it was reported that half a million copies had been circulated and some 50,000 replies received. According to the poll, roughly 84 per cent of young Canadians were opposed to any kind of conscription (the breakdown was 74 per cent English and 99 per cent French). Renier pointed out that the planned discussion of the results of the question-

naire could not be held because of the Defence of Canada Regulations. (The Montreal offices of the Congress were raided by the R.C.M.P.)

Then, on August 2, 1940, Houde issued a statement opposing National Registration as a sure forerunner of conscription and advising Montrealers not to register. According to the *Star* of August 3, Houde's decision was not unpremeditated, nor his own exclusively. 'It seemed probable that a majority of the Executive Council would stand by the Mayor.' There was some suggestion that the Council should publicly dissociate itself from the Mayor's stand, but Alderman John Kerry was the only one who dissented solely as a matter of principle. The *Gazette* commented that Houde's announcement had not been made in haste, but only after full discussion with the Executive Committee.

Then the blow fell as it was bound to fall. On the night of August 5, about 11.30, when Houde, with his wife and secretary, was still at City Hall finishing up the day's business, members of the provincial police and the R.C.M.P. were posted outside, to await the Mayor's exit. Houde came out first, while his wife remained behind to speak to the secretary. He was quietly arrested, the only witness being a City Hall watchman, who informed Mme Houde of what had taken place when she came out. Houde went quietly to R.C.M.P. headquarters in the old post office building on Place d'Armes, where he was questioned, and then he was taken by car to the internment camp at Petawawa in northern Ontario. At the same time Houde's Mount Royal Hotel apartment and his private home were raided. The *Star*, on August 6, commented on the 'large Napoleon library found there', reminding its readers that a similar library on Napoleon had been found in the home of Canadian fascist leader Lucien Arcand, who had been arrested earlier. The article remarked that 'another prominent student of Napoleonic lore is Adolf Hitler', a considerable departure from truth.

(The next Council meeting had scheduled a discussion of 'National Registration' as the first item on its agenda, but after Houde's arrest, said the *Star*, it was assumed nothing would come of it.)

Protests at Houde's arrest were voiced by nationalist politicians – Dr. P. H. Hamel, former Member of the Quebec legislature, J. E. Grégoire, ex-mayor of Quebec, Louis Even, Social Credit leader, Paul Bouchard, and René Chaloult, all of whom were also asking that no Canadian called up under the Mobilization Act be forced to serve overseas. There were no great number of protests; but it was to the credit of Alderman John Kerry, who had dissented from the detention of Houde as a matter of principle, that he rejected this harsh treatment of an official who had simply spoken his mind. Kerry remained one of the few who at various

times appealed against Houde's internment, much as he disagreed with the sentiments Houde had expressed.

The federal government bungled Houde's arrest badly by attempting to conceal it. A facetious article in the Montreal *Star* of August 6, 1940, said that 'life in an internment camp is no rosy existence, nor is it one of great hardship. In fact, Houde may still run for election . . . each hut has its own representative spokesman who helps assign the work for his hut. He may send one letter a week and receive one visitor each month.' (His term as mayor still had three months to run when he was arrested.) His salary, said the *Star*, 'will be cut from $20,000 a year to 20 cents a day, provided he works'. Newspapers were banned, the *Star* added, but Houde said he had no trouble keeping up with the news.

The change in Houde's attitude from that stated in his Morrisburg speech some years earlier may be attributed to a variety of causes, none of them necessarily completely correct. The effort at the League of Nations to impose sanctions on Italy for its invasion of Ethiopia (which the Canadian delegate at Geneva, W. R. Riddell, supported, to the deep embarrassment of the Ottawa government) no doubt played a part in the changing attitude of Houde. For Quebec, so largely a Roman Catholic community, stood almost solidly against the imposition of anti-Italian sanctions. A similar statement is equally true of the Quebec attitude to Franco's Spain. Sympathy for Pétain after the fall of France was another factor, for similar reasons. But the crowning factor in the change in Houde's attitude can perhaps be attributed to the rearmament policies of the Mackenzie King government elected in 1935, which in its 1936 budget boosted arms expenditures by as much as seventy per cent. From one end of the province to the other, the question was heard, 'Against whom are we rearming to fight? Are we soon to find ourselves embroiled in still another imperialist war?'

Houde, always a man with a wet finger raised to catch the direction of the prevailing winds, no doubt sensed the mood of his people to the point that, when the leaders of both major political parties vowed in September 1939 that wartime enlistment would *always* be conducted on a strictly voluntary basis, the Mayor of Montreal was the first person of political note in the whole country to scoff that he did not believe a word of it. It was his speech urging Montrealers not to sign papers under the National Registration Act, on the ground that it was bound to be the forerunner of conscription, which put His Worship into internment camp at Petawawa, and later at Fredericton. There he remained – a thorn in the flesh of the government for most of the rest of the war. The fact remains that it was a sick Minister of Justice, Quebec's

Ernest Lapointe, who travelled specially to Ottawa to sign the commitment papers, thereby taking full federal responsibility for what was generally regarded throughout Quebec as a rash and virtually criminal act.

Certainly Houde played the role of model prisoner in each camp. James Franceschini, a major contractor of Italian birth (in whom not a vestige of treason against Canada could ever be found, but who was nevertheless, like Houde, deprived of his liberty for several years before his case was given serious review), more than once described Houde's behaviour at Petawawa as that of 'the life of the party'. 'He certainly preferred the company of Communist internees to that of the Fascists,' Franceschini chuckled one day. 'Not that he shared their views, because he didn't, but because he found Arcand and other members of the fascist tribe such dull drab company, whereas the Commies always took life as it came along, with a grin and a shrug of the shoulders.'

Others have made comparable remarks in my hearing, including military officers charged with maintaining the discipline of the camps. Houde automatically lost his mayoralty as the result of a special change in the Defence of Canada Regulation declaring that no internee should be eligible for public office during the term of his internment. Houde's answer was typical. 'I've just lost $20,000 a year,' he chortled, 'but I can get twenty cents a day as mayor of my hut in Petawawa – and once I get out of here you can bet the people of Montreal will see to it that I get my job back.' Which is precisely what they did. But years would pass before *that* happy event would come about. Meanwhile he remained the camp's best woodcutter, its most amiable spirit, lost almost a hundred pounds (which he proceeded to put on again almost as soon as he had been released), and bided his time – to the embarrassment of the powers who were 'fighting the war' in Ottawa and who (one guesses) wished time and again that they had never heard of a man named Camillien Houde.

But if Houde had erred in his 'Oppose National Registration' speech (and there can be no doubt that a majority of Canadians outside Quebec were averse to his views), he was by no means the only French-speaking politician who had misjudged the temper of the country, or of Quebec itself. Even before Houde's fall from grace, his arch-enemy, Premier Maurice Duplessis, had got into a comparable trap. In October 1939, he had suddenly called a general election on the 'no participation' issue. The federal ministers from Quebec (much of the credit accrues to that great political organizer, the Honourable C. G. 'Chubby' Power, Minister of National Defence for Air and Associate Minister of National Defence) promptly seized the gauntlet thrown down by Duplessis. To a man they

vowed that, in the event of a Duplessis victory, they would leave the federal cabinet, considering the result a vote of non-confidence in themselves, thereby leaving Quebec without cabinet representation at the centre of the war effort. The gambit worked. When the votes were counted, the Liberals under Godbout were in power in Quebec, with seventy seats to fifteen for the Union Nationale – and one independent: Camillien Houde.

Duplessis's misreading of the minds of his people was to have one subsequent effect on the politics of Quebec – the ultimate healing of the breach between Duplessis and his arch-enemy, Houde.

Prior to his incarceration, Houde had endeavoured to push a resolution condeming the war effort through the new legislature, in his own name and that of the extreme 'nationalist' René Chaloult. It was swamped, fifty-six to thirteen, in the ensuing vote – this after the defeat of the Duplessis government in October 1939.

To say that the internment of Camillien Houde was a federal, provincial, and municipal issue throughout the period of his incarceration, though in varying respects, is to call attention to the obvious. As to the non-French populace of the country as a whole, no doubt a majority believed he had committed an act of treason against Canada, although this feeling could by no means be considered unanimous. At least some of this was directly connected with Prime Minister King's step-by-step approach to conscription itself, beginning with his 'no conscription under any conditions', through the plebiscite of 1942 (when King asked to be released from his previous 'no conscription' pledge, and Quebec replied with a resounding no), the National Resources Mobilization Act, and, finally, conscription for overseas service itself. The pro-Houde element obviously believed that Montreal's then mayor had been right all the way back to his first anti-conscription statements. This was what may be termed the public reaction, to which should be added the fact that the internment of Houde continued, despite considerable outcry (especially in Montreal and Quebec) for his unconditional release.

Official appeals for his release were made twice in 1943 and again in June 1944. In Quebec, time was running out for the Liberal régime and, as general elections approached, Premier Godbout and his chief organizer, Arthur Fontaine, paid a special visit to Ottawa to plead with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice not to turn Houde loose before the campaign, as they feared what part he might take in it and what the results might be. The federal government listened to these pleas, and Houde was held at Fredericton pending the vote which took place on August 8 and resulted in a virtual saw-off, although Maurice Duplessis carried a sufficient number of seats (with only thirty-six per

cent of the total vote) to form the government. On this point it is intriguing to note that through the 1939–44 years, the period of Liberal rule to which reference has been made, Maurice Duplessis had devoted little time to war oratory or the Canada-wide war effort, and had struck out more on the line of provincial rights and autonomy, leaving the anti-war position to the newly formed anti-war party which called itself the Bloc Populaire. It proved to be good political tactics. The Bloc carried few seats. Duplessis became Premier, as head of the largest party in the House, on August 30, 1944.

With the provincial elections out of the way, the federal government clearly felt that it was now in a position to dispose of the affair that had become its most serious embarrassment, at least in Montreal and Quebec. On August 16, after Duplessis had won the election by a whisker but still had not assumed the role of premier, the Minister of Justice signed the necessary documents to release Houde. The former mayor returned to a hero's welcome in his native city on August 18. Specific figures can never be assessed, but it has been said with considerable authority that at least fifty thousand Montrealers welcomed Camillien home from his four years of internment. The rotunda of the railway station was so packed with admirers that the homing hero could not find his way out. This was probably the occasion that made him decide to pick up his career where he had forcibly abandoned it four years earlier almost to the day – this and the tumultuous welcome he received when he appeared on the balcony of what was still his 'official' St. Hubert Street home.

Two months after his release, he threw his hat into the election ring for the mayor's seat again. During one of his speeches, he deplored the burning of Union Jacks: 'It's Canada's flag until we get another one we have been talking about for so long.' Still Houde the enigma! This election was a particularly dirty one, in which Houde used various manoeuvres against Mayor Adhémar Raynault, first accusing him of being a Mason and then charging that he was a member of the French nationalist secret society called the Order of Jacques Cartier. Houde won by a majority of 14,783. Houde remarked that 'the English had seen fit not to support him, but he would be at the service of all citizens.' Speaking in English, Houde said, 'You English-speaking citizens may not see eye to eye with the rest of the population of the city and the Province of Quebec, but the day will come when you will have need of the stability of Quebec, when you will need the soundness of Quebec for other purposes than for war, and we will be welcome to the rest of Canada.'

In February 1945, Mayor Maurice Villey of Fleury-sur-Orne, near

Caen in Normandy, where many Canadians had lost their lives, asked His Worship to approve a monument to be erected in his village, in honour of the soldiers of the Régiment de Maisonneuve who 'were the first Allied soldiers to enter the place and clear out the enemy.' Mayor Villey asked Houde's permission to associate the name of Montreal with the monument, as 'our fields are lined with crosses bearing French names, and we want the families of Canadian soldiers who fell on our soil for the love of France to know that we want to give their remains the honour they deserve. We see in the men of the Régiment de Maisonneuve not only generous allies but also fellow countrymen.' Houde hastened to welcome the plan, the kind of gracious gesture that endeared him to many men who were by no means his supporters.

On April 5, 1945, Houde announced plans to lead a new movement in Quebec in federal elections – to revive the issue of his internment, National Registration, and the plebiscite question. On April 28 he announced he had joined the Bloc Populaire as co-leader with Maxime Raymond. In May Houde said he saw that the Liberals were advising French Canadians to learn as early as possible to speak English. Houde said that, if this were the case, 'we would disappear as French Canadians.' Yet on June 11, at Sorel, he was pelted with tomatoes during an address and his bodyguard had to fire blanks to stop the disturbance provoked by these particular remarks.

On November 27, 1947, Houde was re-elected Mayor of Montreal by acclamation.

In January 1948 he joined in conflict with Councillor J. O. Asselin, then chairman of the Executive Committee, demanding withdrawal of the executive status and powers claimed by Asselin to speak for Montreal on the Metropolitan Commission, a purely consultative body. After three years of quiescence in respect to the new rules whereby the mayor was only a figurehead and official greeter, Houde stepped down from the rostrum at City Hall to speak from the floor and to lead opposition to Asselin. One excited elevator man exclaimed: 'It was just like old times.' Houde announced he would henceforth attend all meetings of the Executive Committee and the Metropolitan Commission. The newspapers commented that this was Houde's reaction to the waning power of the mayor and the Council, in the face of the usurpation of control by the bureaucracy of the central administration, which had led to the confrontation with Asselin.

It was in 1948 too that Houde and Duplessis buried their quarrel. Duplessis urgently wanted Houde's support to get the Montreal vote. Houde's price tag is said to have been the return to Montreal of its fiscal autonomy. What better reason could there have been for reconciliation?

The Union Nationale won eight out of the fifteen Montreal seats in the ensuing election. Houde repeatedly appeared on Duplessis's platform to make it clear that the breach had been healed. Without those eight seats Duplessis could not have won!

Houde said that Duplessis's election was a 'victory over Communism – a victory for provincial autonomy and French-Canadian survival'. Houde also said that every Montreal riding that was exclusively French-Canadian had given positive results for Duplessis. 'We lost only the heterogeneous ridings in the city. This is a warning that henceforth French Canadians want to be at home in their province and respected throughout the country.'

Both Houde and Duplessis said that the 'autonomy of the province is the only solid rampart against Communism'. Houde went one further by saying that 'centralized government is one of the dominant characteristics of communist domination everywhere.' In a major speech, supporting Duplessis on the latter's own platform, Houde spoke of his own political career, which he divided into four major periods – the first three having been in the time of 'depression, when he devoted his efforts to providing food, shelter and clothing to the unemployed who were persistently neglected by Ottawa . . . and the fourth when he, Houde, was given food, shelter and clothing by Ottawa as his reward'. Houde congratulated Duplessis for giving Quebec the fleur-de-lis as a symbol around which French-speaking Canadians could rally. Duplessis, for his part, reminded Montrealers that his government had given Montreal the Pie IX Boulevard bridge, the new buildings on St. Helen's Island, and the Botanical Gardens, and that they had greatly extended help in education.

The 1950 campaign was Houde's last appearance on the mayoralty hustings, and he was again the victor. There were those who said he was 'playing the martyr', always seeking to capitalize on the period when he had been held in internment camp through the war years. There is an element of contradiction in this argument since, in 1949, he contested and won the Montreal federal riding of Papineau as an out-and-out independent, with Bloc leanings but fighting strictly on his own. During the campaign he had repeatedly declared his desire to go to Ottawa to 'give Louis St. Laurent and others a taste of their own medicine'. Yet, once elected, the idea must have palled. Despite the fact that the parliamentary staff in Ottawa had converted two seats into one to accommodate his huge bulk, he did not once attend a session of the House. There was always an element of the leprechaun about this remarkable man.

This item alone is indicative of the strange, enigmatic personality of

Camillien Houde, of a peculiar ability to 'blow hot and cold', at times even to lose interest in a fight once he had engaged in it. As a person he was charming and friendly, with a certain addiction to long silences when he ceased to be the immediate centre of attraction. That he was a vain man is indubitably true. That he was an out-and-out professional in politics is beyond question. He won his last term for mayor in 1950, primarily on the basis of his struggle with Executive Committee Chairman Asselin for control of City Hall, in which Houde could be called the victor. For Duplessis and Quebec made haste to return to the mayoralty the powers that Houde had spent a political lifetime demanding and defending. With Houde's retirement one of Montreal's most remarkable characters passed from the political stage.

Quips by the score have been attributed to Houde. When Their Majesties visited Montreal in 1939, the Mayor had been advised by the Master of Protocol, Emile Vaillancourt, that on the occasion of the royal banquet under no conditions must he address Her Majesty until the Queen herself began a conversation. Noting that the Mayor was seriously reading a sheet of paper beneath the tablecloth the Queen inquired, 'What is that you are reading, Your Worship?' Camillien is reported to have replied, 'The foolish instructions given to me by the man in charge, Madam!' On a subsequent occasion after World War II when a member of the royal family visited Montreal, Camillien is alleged to have said, 'I am more than pleased to be your host this evening, Your Royal Highness, as I was the guest of your family for four years until recently.' Such is the nature of the folklore that has been built around this fabulous character.

In December 1953, in the course of an after-dinner speech in Ottawa, Houde said, 'As long as we keep a good balance between prayers and sinning, I know that my city is not going to sink into wickedness.'

In Quebec City in February 1954 he stated that 'Canada's living standard might be lower if the country had not been captured by Britain. Much of the higher standard of living was due to the Anglo-Saxon element.' The pro-British instinct never actually died in Camillien Houde. Bitterness was never in his nature.

On February 4, 1954, when the question of Houde's pension was brought up in the provincial house by Duplessis, Houde absented himself during the discussion. All members, both Liberal and Union Nationale, former political foes and friends, warmly supported the proposal to grant Houde an annual pension equal to two-thirds of his mayoral salary of eighteen thousand dollars. Even Asselin said, 'We all know he has served the city for eighteen years and has not had time to take care of his personal affairs.' When Houde returned to his seat following the

discussion, Duplessis said, 'I regret, Mr. Mayor, but everyone has voted against your pension.' Houde retorted, 'I am surprised to hear that. There are so many around who would like to get rid of me.'

In September 1954, he went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester for a checkup, but, like Khrushchev, announced when asked if he would run for mayor during the coming elections, 'I'll be there to bury them all!' But doctor's orders absolutely forbade him to enter the contest. That was the election in which Jean Drapeau defeated Sarto Fournier.

Houde came out of retirement briefly in 1956 to support Maurice Duplessis. Referring to Mayor Drapeau's generosity in providing 'an escort', Camillien chuckled: 'Mayor Drapeau believes in taking care of retired mayors.' Houde said people should vote for Duplessis because he was a born leader in a day when 'there are few men left with the quality of true leadership'. The wheel had come full circle!

On September 11, 1958, Houde died in his sleep. An estimated 150,000 citizens trekked past his coffin as he lay in state in the Hall of Honour at City Hall. At the funeral at least 50,000 citizens lined the streets; Duplessis and Mayor Drapeau led the provincial and civic dignitaries. The last rites were held in Notre Dame Church. Houde had had his own tomb prepared three years earlier at Côte des Neiges Cemetery – it was modelled after Napoleon's in the crypt at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris!

The Montreal *Star*'s epitaph was shared by all: 'He loved Montreal . . . it was an affection wholeheartedly reciprocated.'

So passed one of Montreal's most remarkable citizens. One wonders in retrospect what Lord Atholstan would have thought of his original investment! *Sic transit gloria!*

24 The World City

The internment of Mayor Camillien Houde to the contrary, and given the overwhelming 'no' vote from French-speaking Montreal and the rest of the province when Prime Minister Mackenzie King asked, by plebiscite, to be released from his 'no conscription' pledge of 1939, the conscription issue by no means engendered the bitterness and hatreds it had left behind after World War I. To explain the contrast is difficult. Houde merits some of the credit, for, though he gibed constantly at the conscriptionists, at no time before or after his return did he show the least sign of bitterness. At least a portion of the credit must be given to King himself, determined as he undoubtedly was to avoid an incurable ethnic split which might well have destroyed Canada. Thus he moved with extreme care, even after his resounding victory in the plebiscite in every province but Quebec, in implementing enforced military service and in applying its enabling legislation, Bill 80. A phrase used by the Prime Minister at the height of the plebiscite campaign, declaring that what he was asking the people to approve was 'conscription if necessary, but not necessarily conscription', remains a Canadian classic.

Yet the Prime Minister meant precisely what he said. When the first units of conscripted men were called up, they were sworn in solely for home service. Not until the closing months of the war – after losing his Minister of Defence, Layton Ralston, on the conscription issue and failing to elect his successor, General Andrew McNaughton (who had convinced King that the required troops could be found through the

voluntary process) – did enforced service for overseas become a *fait accompli*. Even then the numbers sent abroad were severely restricted and Hitler soon obliged by committing suicide in his Berlin bunker as the Allied forces closed in on the Nazi capital.

These were not the only reasons for the lessened bitterness. French-speaking Canadians were given a much greater sense of direct participation in the selection of regiments and in the choice of senior officers than they had been in 1914–18. This time there was no Sam Hughes to muddy the waters at Ottawa. Yet, that the misunderstandings were there is undeniable, as is the generalization that the country's two founding ethnic groups were again severely divided.

Such things are not the concern of this book. Nor is the military history of any Montreal regiment or other unit. Their stories have been covered in a plethora of official histories. The military commitment of the metropolis was one of major importance and the city's French-speaking units acquitted themselves on the battlefields of Europe as effectively and courageously as did those composed of officers and men whose mother tongue was English. Montreal's contribution to air force and navy was of an equally high standard.

One or two special items must be included in the record of the war years, however. Montreal's industrial output, especially during the period when a beleaguered Britain stood alone but for her Commonwealth partners, outstripped by far any records achieved in other days. With the rest of Canada, it could rightly share the encomium 'arsenal of democracy', which indeed Canada was through the long months until first Lend-Lease and then the 'incident' at Pearl Harbor finally brought the United States in.

But there is one special aspect of Montreal's war effort, especially during the beginnings of Armageddon, to which too little attention has been paid in the past. It happened in the early months of war, when Lord Beaverbrook was the Minister of Aircraft Production in Britain and bomber 'survival' could not keep pace with losses. At this stage, Beaverbrook approached two Montreal friends, Morris Wilson, president of the Royal Bank of Canada, and Sir Edward Beatty, president of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, with a simple inquiry: Did they believe they could secure aircraft in the United States, move them across the Canadian border by a variety of subterfuges, and have them flown across the Atlantic? Without hesitation, or even knowing the answers, both men replied in the affirmative. And so the private, non-profit company called Atfero was formed.

The two men, greatly assisted by the Minister of Munitions and Supply, C. D. Howe, Harold Long, and many others, found the first

Bonsecours Market, about 1920

The Dorchester Street bridge area in 1930. Today this is the site of the magnificent Place Ville Marie development.

RCHE aux FLEUR

(*Opposite*) The City Hall at night, with the Nelson Monument

(*Right*) Two of Montreal's most colourful mayors: (*left*) Médéric Martin and (*right*) Camillien Houde

(*Below*) The Basilica of Mary, Queen of the World, and a corner of Dominion Square

Jacques Cartier Bridge seen through the latticework of the old fort area on St. Helen's Island

A winter scene in Montreal's famed Mount Royal Park, showing skaters on Beaver Lake and the balcony of a nearby restaurant

An aerial view of downtown Montreal

The assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in session at its Montreal headquarters

Montreal at night from Mount Royal

batches of two-engined Hudson bombers, while others rounded up civilian crews to fly them. As the United States was not then at war, her own service flying personnel at first were unable to make deliveries on Canadian soil. But Atfero persisted and in short order rounded up civilian crews – Canadian bush pilots, men from the 'banana' air lines of Latin America, even some whose licences had been suspended – and these men set out to fly the Hudsons from Montreal to Britain by way of Gander in Newfoundland and Aldergrove, near Belfast. Fifty Hudsons were delivered with the loss of only one aircraft, the result of an accident in Newfoundland in which Sir Frederick Banting, co-discoverer of insulin, was killed.

It was a remarkable performance, for the light-engined Hudsons passed 'the point of no return' long before reaching their destination. The crews were a wild and happy-go-lucky lot, but it is equally true that they were the men who earned the title 'fathers of global aviation' as the term is today. Mercenaries? Yes. Adventurers? Yes. 'Barnstormers' and mountebanks – but men of unsurpassable courage who have received far too little credit for the labours they performed in flying to Britain (at a time of radio blackout over the Atlantic and, hence, no mid-ocean weather reports) squadrons of light bombers with which to harass the victorious Germans who had occupied the Low Countries and France. Never in history had such a madcap crew of 'merry Andrews' been assembled!

After the Hudsons came the heavier, four-engined Liberators, and after Atfero and its civilian band, the Royal Air Force Ferry Command established its base at the newly built Dorval airport in Montreal. Atfero was disbanded. But, by then flying the Atlantic had become, in airmen's language, 'a piece of cake'. The total losses at sea were three aircraft. Hundreds of U.S. and subsequently Canadian-assembled aircraft made the safe flight to Britain. This dual effort constitutes a record of which Montreal may be proud, and one which indirectly made this great cosmopolitan city 'the world's air capital'. For no sooner had the United Nations been born than its International Civil Aviation Organization moved into permanent Montreal quarters, to be followed immediately by the head office of the International Air Transport Association, the consultative and co-operative body of the world's major air lines. Thus, if World War II could be said to have bestowed any single, lasting benefit on Montreal, it was this unofficial conferring of the title 'air capital of the world' on Canada's great bilingual city, a role to which it clings jealously to this day. In 1969 the Canadian government announced plans for a great new international airport, close to Montreal, to provide for the coming of the huge new supersonic jets of

tomorrow. In short, world flight is in this great city's bloodstream. It is, of course, the headquarters of Air Canada, the publicly owned world air line, among civil aviation's greatest.

The year 1954 saw the coming to City Hall of a young lawyer named Jean Drapeau. Back in 1943, as a young man in his twenties, he had been admitted to the bar. Through the war years, as a student and as an accredited barrister, Jean Drapeau had been counted among the city's ardent anti-conscriptionists, had been extremely active in La Ligue pour la Défense du Canada (an organization which maintained that Canada's duty is to defend its own soil, and not to force its sons to fight in 'foreign wars'), and had repeatedly been a candidate (and persistent loser) of the Bloc Populaire, the anti-war and strongly anti-conscriptionist party. But with the return to peace young Drapeau, still under thirty, turned to other causes. With his fellow-student, the barrister Pacifique Plante, Drapeau turned his guns on organized crime and its apparent tolerance by a lax, if not worse, police force.

The campaign began with a series of articles in *Le Devoir* under the double by-line of Drapeau and Plante. In unvarnished, uncompromising terms, associations between members of the police force and the underworld were dealt with so frankly that it was impossible for the world of politics to ignore them. A crime commission, headed by Mr. Justice Caron, sat for the better part of four years. One of its many results was the suspension of Montreal's chief of police. Others went by the same route. Not content with the brief glory of having successfully fought the city's crime organization (Plante, under threat of death, meanwhile sought asylum in Mexico), Drapeau announced his intention of contesting Montreal's mayoralty at the first opportunity. In the balloting of 1954, with eight other contestants in the field, Drapeau was swept into office. His vote, 76,188, fell just short of the total compiled by all other eight candidates, 76,872. Among them was Adhémar Raynault, who had occupied the mayoral chair during Houde's internment. Though running second to Drapeau, Raynault's total was only a few more than 20,000 ballots.

That night it seemed to Jean Drapeau that he was in a position to tackle the job of cleaning up Montreal. It was an assumption bordering on the naïve. At the polls he had been given the all-out support of the Civic Action League, but the league's candidates had not been able to carry enough wards to elect a majority to City Council. Thus Drapeau and his friends found themselves with a cause, supported by the public, but opposed by 'the machine'. In addition to suspending the city's chief of police, the Caron probe had sharply criticized the behaviour of several councillors, some of whom had been re-elected. Of his first term

in office, the record clearly says that Montreal's youngest and first true reform mayor of the twentieth century quickly made the discovery that a wide chasm can exist between winning an election and putting a program into effect.

It was a lesson Jean Drapeau was to learn in the harsh school of experience. As a beginning he tried the tactics of conciliation, hoping to bring to his side at least some of the councillors who had defeated his candidates. 'I hold no rancour against any man,' he said in his acceptance speech at City Hall on election night. 'I want to be everybody's mayor. If the voters don't approve of what I do, then they will throw me out. I have no desire to hang on to office simply to qualify for a pension eighteen years from now!'

By 1957 Drapeau was able to point to 135 miles of newly paved streets as well as 306 miles of resurfacing. Capital expenditures over his three years of office had jumped from $26 million to $60 million however. Two huge new incinerators had put an end to the disease-spreading problems of antiquated city dumps.

But the main issue of the 1957 election was the announcement of Mayor Drapeau's scheme for a slum-clearance project to replace the 'Dozois Plan' of tearing down slums and resettling the inhabitants in the heart of commercial and industrial Montreal. Instead, Drapeau proposed a $40 million suburban project consisting of three thousand dwellings on Domaine Street in the northeast end, bounded by St. Hubert Street, the Metropolitan Boulevard, Papineau Avenue, and the C.N.R. tracks. Here there would be space for parks, green grass, and pure air, as well as blocks of flats. Anticipating opposition, Mayor Drapeau called a special meeting to lay the plan before City Council a few weeks before the election. Several hundred spectators crowded the visitors' gallery, supported noisily from the floor by councillors Lucien Croteau and Nathan Aronoff. The Council meeting ended in scenes of wild disorder.

On nomination day, Drapeau's challengers were Charles Lafontaine, former mayor of suburban Ville St. Michel, and Senator Sarto Fournier, running under the banner of the Greater Montreal Rally. Throughout the campaign, Drapeau charged the press with distorting his views on slum clearance and lectured the newspapers on their duty to inform, 'not to apply constant pressure on people with their publishers' opinions'. He pointed to the contract for $4 million to provide a new police training school, as well as a public pool and hockey rinks in Maisonneuve Park. Again he warned that, if his supporters were not returned to office, 'gambling, betting, and organized vice will return. The Mafia never surrenders . . . they just mark time.'

However, his failure to push through other reforms because the real power at City Hall was vested in other hands, plus the hostility aroused by his slum-clearance proposals, turned the tide against him in 1957. Opponents charged that Drapeau and his 'partners', led by Pierre Desmarais of the Civic Action League, wanted to establish a dictatorship at City Hall. Senator Sarto Fournier spoke of the 'waste and orgies staged by the Mayor at civic receptions'. Even the Liberal Association of Beauce County urged its native son, Senator Fournier, to withdraw from the mayoralty race, 'as his presence divided the opposition and favours the dictatorial manoeuvres of the Union Nationale which is determined to monopolize the administration of the city of Montreal'. But it was not Fournier who quit. The bitterly fought election was reduced to two contestants on October 22 when Charles Lafontaine declared he could no longer 'afford' to run, leaving Senator Fournier as the mayor's only opponent.

When the votes were counted, Drapeau had lost by 4,000 to Senator Fournier. The Senator had piled up 83,229 ballots, even more than Drapeau had secured in 1954. The Montreal *Star* said the result 'seemed to be more a personal defeat for Drapeau than for the Civic Action League', but C.A.L. leaders blamed the defeat largely on the west-end voters. To *Le Devoir*'s editor, Gérard Filion, Fournier's victory was actually that of Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis. Filion wrote that in the 1954 election the English and the Jews had voted against Drapeau, as had the French-Canadian lower classes. 'It was the lower and middle bourgeoisie which gave the mayor the support of the Civic Action League.' Filion wrote bluntly that the same phenomenon had happened again, that Fournier had been elected by the English capitalists and the French-Canadian proletariat. Drapeau, he said, had kept the confidence of the French-speaking middle classes, especially property-owners. *Le Devoir* concluded that Drapeau and the league were still powerful in the east end, and in northern residential areas populated by the middle class, while 'the Greater Montreal Rally supporters and independents have been effective in the "quartiers populaires" in the lower city, in the wealthy central area and in such English-speaking wards as Notre Dame de Grâce.' Filion ended bitterly: 'The election of Fournier is that of a nonentity . . . le grand vainqueur est Duplessis . . . il a fait battre le maire Drapeau.' One fact did remain sure. English-speaking Montrealers, remembering the war years, were still not ready to vote for Drapeau.

To say that his defeat in 1959 was a bitter blow to the young mayor is to understate the case. To paraphrase his own description, he retired to the privacy of his law office, neither seeking nor wanting clients, but

needing only time to ponder what future he could envisage for himself in the realm of politics. Practically nothing was heard of or from him through long months of 'brooding'. By the time he emerged he had come to one clear decision. 'The time had come,' he said, 'to stop fighting for lost causes.' In 1959 he published a pamphlet entitled 'Jean Drapeau vous parle', in which he stressed that the parliamentary system is as essential in any great city as in federal or provincial affairs. On the eve of the 1960 elections he broke away from the Civic Action League to form his own Civic Party, fielding candidates of his own choice for every Council seat. On this occasion he again presented himself to the public, not merely as a mayoralty candidate but as head of his own party seeking a majority. The idea caught on, especially with the rank and file of the French-speaking electorate. English-speaking Montrealers still hung back, refusing to forget the war years and the Bloc Populaire. But the vote was sufficient to carry Drapeau back into City Hall, as head of a party strong enough to form a majority government. The 'new Drapeau' promptly set about establishing a reputation for action, for putting ideas into effect, where others had merely talked about them on the hustings.

Back in the chair, Drapeau took immediate steps to halt the resurgent crime wave (seven unsolved murders in less than a month before the election, no fewer than fifty-four bank robberies during the year). Seeking expert aid, Drapeau visited London and Paris where he enlisted the help of Scotland Yard and the Prefecture of Police, each of which agreed to send a senior officer to Montreal for a year to advise on how the city's house should be put in order.

For at least fifty years, mayoralty candidates had been promising to give Montreal a subway system. In 1961 the 'Drapeau team' quietly called for tenders and on May 23, 1962, the work of digging began under midtown Berri Street. In retrospect, the sudden change from talk to action marks the point at which English-speaking Montrealers decided that the time had come to forget the rankling disagreements of the war years and to live in the present. In the 1962 municipal election, the voters gave the Drapeau team a sweeping victory. Ninety per cent of the ballots went to the town's man of action and his candidates. At last the English vote had switched!

Meanwhile the Quebec government, now under Jean Lesage's Liberals, had extended the life of the Montreal civic administration from two years to four, which gave Drapeau twice as much time to prove that he had meant what he said when he declared: 'The 1960s belong to Montreal. Our city will become the London, the Paris, the great cosmopolis of Canada and all North America.' When he sought

re-election in 1966, ninety-four per cent of the ballots cast went to Jean Drapeau and his 'government'. Opposition in City Council was reduced to a trickle of 'independents'. No matter the individual's ethnic origin, the people of Montreal had swung into the Drapeau camp at last!

From the moment of his return to power Jean Drapeau had been quietly seeking some form of celebration for Montreal which would provide the Canadian centrepiece for the forthcoming centennial of Confederation in 1967. His Métro, the subway, scheduled to begin operation in 1966, would be something to brag about, but the context was more local than national. Completion of that great trinity of theatres and concert halls, La Place des Arts, fell into a similar category. What Drapeau wanted but seemed highly unlikely to create was a celebration that would win acclaim from coast to coast. Luck suddenly came his way. The Universal and International Exhibition scheduled for 1967 already had been assigned to Moscow by the Bureau of International Expositions. Suddenly the Soviet capital opted out, leaving the Bureau the choice of selecting another country and city, or of cancelling for the year.

Drapeau was off posthaste to Ottawa to talk to Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. He found the Prime Minister acquiescent, but not overly enthusiastic, and since these official events are awarded to nations, which in turn assign them to specific cities, enthusiasm at the summit is a prerequisite of success. Moreover the Bureau demands of any applicant a *dossier* of information sufficiently detailed to establish clearly the ability of the recipient country to perform. The Ottawa attitude appeared, at least on the surface, to be: 'First let us find out if the Bureau will award the fair to Canada. After that will be time enough to start putting our bill of particulars together. Meanwhile, if you want to see what you can do with the people in Paris, by all means go ahead.'

It was a quiet and thoughtful Drapeau who returned to Montreal. But by the next day he had a team organized at City Hall to assemble all the essential information. Simultaneously he let it be known in Paris that Canada and Montreal would be putting in a bid. Nor did he sit back in the deep armchair in his own office. Instead he travelled to Europe to make the personal acquaintance of all permanent delegates to and influential members of the Bureau. Thus, when he returned to Paris in the autumn of 1962 he did so armed not only with the answer to every question that could be asked, but with the knowledge that, when an award meeting was held, Canada and Montreal would not be without friends at the council table.

On November 13, 1962, the Bureau awarded to Canada and Montreal not merely an official go-ahead but also something no North American

city had had before – a 'first category exhibition'. Simultaneously, the Bureau stated that the exhibition must be open on April 28, 1967, and must close its gates at midnight on October 27. That meant completion of a great world's fair, for which the theme 'Man and His World' had been chosen, with little more than four years in which to do the job. 'The job' involved finding countries to come and exhibit, creating 'theme' buildings and means of transportation, and settling a host of other items. It also meant preparing a site of approximately 620 acres (not counting car-park areas). By using beautiful St. Helen's Island as a base, joining it by dredge and fill to two smaller islands, Ronde and Verte, and in addition creating a fourth island, to be called Ile Notre Dame, which would actually be larger than the original three linked together, Drapeau assured the Bureau, the task could be done. Nevertheless Canada and Montreal abounded in citizens who, in 1963, vowed, 'It simply cannot be done.' Where, for example, could Drapeau find experienced personnel for the top jobs in a country that had never attempted a task of this scale and had nowhere to turn to hire men of experience?

All this would have been a gargantuan task even for men of lifelong experience. But Drapeau's troubles were only beginning. The Commissioner General and his deputy, appointed by Mr. Diefenbaker, resigned. Rumour-mongers spread the tale that the Mayor wanted the top job and all the glory for himself. The statement was completely without foundation, but Mr. Diefenbaker's successor, Prime Minister Lester Pearson, heard it and because it came 'from sources believed to be reliable' accepted it as true. To my knowledge, after remarking that 'either I've got to get this thing straightened out, or pack it in,' Mr. Pearson inquired, 'What will the Mayor say if I offer him the job on condition that he quit the mayoralty?' The answer Mr. Pearson received was: 'Drapeau will go right through the roof, believing in his Gallic mind that you know you are offering him a plum he cannot accept, because he regards the mayoralty as his first responsibility.'

So Pearson summoned Drapeau to Ottawa and offered him the commissioner-generalship with no strings attached. The Mayor refused. The Prime Minister then asked, 'Have you some other candidate in mind?' To which the Mayor replied in the affirmative, and named His Excellency Pierre Dupuy, Canada's Ambassador to France, from whom he had received much support in Paris and with whom he had established close rapport. At this juncture Mr. Pearson pointed out that as Canada's senior ambassador abroad Mr. Dupuy had reached retirement age, and could retire from a career 'filled with honours' at the moment of his own choice. Would such a man be likely to accept a role which,

in the event of failure or only partial success, might well ruin a distinguished career?

Jean Drapeau then said, 'If you like, I'll take the job for a maximum of six months, during the course of which I'll deliver Dupuy to you in person.' Such a move did not become necessary. Dupuy accepted over the transatlantic telephone, as there is good reason to suspect Jean Drapeau knew he would. 'Expo 67' was off and running at last. How the job was completed on time would take volumes to cover. It *did* open on the scheduled date, it was admittedly the greatest of all exhibitions ever held under the Bureau's or any other aegis, and more than fifty million people passed through the turnstiles during its six-month run, whereas the original attendance estimate had had a top limit of thirty-five million. Jean Drapeau's cup had been filled to overflowing at last!

Never can sufficient credit be given to Pierre Dupuy for the manner in which he flew the length and breadth of the world to persuade national governments to participate, nor to the Canadian provinces and major enterprises that joined to make Expo the most outstanding of all official world exhibitions ever held. Pierre Dupuy died in the spring of 1969 on the French Riviera, where he had retired to live in a quiet villa. His body was flown back to Montreal to lie in state in the Hall of Honour at City Hall, and he was given a full-dress civic funeral in Notre Dame Church. There can be no doubt that the endless months of world travel, followed by six months as official host to an endless procession of heads of state at Expo, had taken their toll on a man already at the beginning of his eighth decade when he took on the task.

The roles played by Montreal in creating the new Venice on the St. Lawrence, by the province of Quebec in building throughways leading to the site from the U.S. border and from the west and east of Canada, and by the federal government in giving a free hand to the men to whom it finally assigned the task, can never be completely assessed. If names are omitted it is because they were so many that one would be bound to overlook many who merit special attention. That Expo 67 left behind it a major bookkeeping debt is undeniable. But that it created a new image of Canada and of Montreal is equally true and perhaps more important.

In fact, so impressed was the civic administration by the success of the International Bureau's approved exhibition that it decided to carry on alone, changing the name to 'Man and His World', Expo's original slogan and theme. Many exhibitors and their pavilions were lost, including Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Attendance fell by a good half below the Expo numbers, but even with this decline, Montreal

outdid the Houston frolic of 1968 in the number of visitors, though losses to the civic treasury were of major proportions.

Even so, Mayor, Executive Committee, and Council were still determined to continue in 1969. To do so, however, involved an exercise in fiscal legerdemain. The city's finances could not carry a repetition of the losses of 1968. The city therefore approached the provincial government in Quebec with a request for a guarantee. Quebec replied that it would go along, but only provided that Ottawa would give the province a two-year moratorium on moneys still due the federal treasury for Quebec's share of Expo 67 costs. After much back and forth discussion, the federal government finally agreed to the requested moratorium (without interest for the delayed period) with the result that Montreal was enabled to go ahead for a third year in 1969. The Russians and Czechs came back, as did others, but the United States and Britain remained out. A few new nation exhibitors were found. The fair reopened in mid June 1969, for what could fairly be called its 'make or break' season, fully realizing that the bulk of its proceeds must come from a local and regional public. Major advertising efforts were made to attract tourist trade from the United States. This persistence on the part of His Worship is another indication of the man's personality. The thought of 'losing' is anathema. The question nevertheless remains: Has he, after all, undertaken to fight another 'lost cause'? (The Fair was still in its operating season of 1969 when this book went to press.)

But Jean Drapeau's vision of Montreal is by no means that of any of his predecessors. He has always been primarily an idea man, always searching for the spectacular event that would place Montreal in the forefront of the world's great cities as a town that can truthfully be called cosmopolitan and more than merely 'national'. Thus, since Expo, he has been instrumental in bringing major-league baseball to the first city outside the United States, where the leading teams of the game have always played. Among his hopeful objectives for the future is the summer Olympics. As an innovation he has created a civic lottery – a strangely indirect way through which residents of communities anywhere in the world can contribute to Montreal's huge tax bill and, by doing so, participate in a monthly draw for huge cash prizes – a scheme at least close to the borderline of Canada's anti-lottery laws, changed somewhat in the interim, however.

In short, Jean Drapeau is a man who lives by ideas, to the point that the young, ardent Quebec nationalist of the 1940s is barely recognizable in the late 1960s. Yet the personality has not actually changed. Then, as now, he was a man totally committed to any cause he might undertake, a vivid enthusiast, yet also a man given to deep brooding when his

schemes do not work as planned. For example, his great hope that the crowning glory of 'his' Expo would be a Montreal-Paris plinth which would present an even more glorious landmark than the Eiffel Tower failed because Paris felt it could not afford the large sum that would have constituted its share. For at least a fortnight Jean Drapeau became a sickly, disappointed man, to whom it was scarcely possible to speak. To the world public he presents the image of a high-spirited go-getter, but underneath this façade lives a man who suffers intensely when failures come his way. The 'broody' side of Drapeau is one the world seldom sees. But it is deep in his nature.

During his years in office, once the Fournier defeat had been put behind him, he has done much to achieve his goal of making Montreal what he himself has repeatedly called a cosmopolitan world-city, a centre of the arts, and indeed of all manner of human activity. But his role has been that of the touchstone. He could never have done it alone.

Yet in 'bringing Montreal into the second half of the twentieth century' Drapeau has never forgotten the past. Much of the Old Montreal, of the days that lead clearly back to its founder Maisonneuve and those who followed him, has been left untouched or restored to its original form. Here is where his own family's roots lie. Thus he refuses to budge when the architects try to convince him that his metropolis urgently needs a new City Hall to vie with the ultra-modern one in Toronto. New buildings will be needed to house a growing city staff, but the 'old' rococo City Hall, standing immediately across Notre Dame Street from the Château de Ramezay, is Montreal's *hôtel de ville* and so it will remain, although its architecture may be reminiscent of another century. Let the high-rise edifices sprout elsewhere. May the boulevards of midtown and the arteries that surround the city abound. But keep your hands off the old! Let it never be forgotten that all this began in 1642! So goes what may be called the Drapeau technique. Past and future alike 'belong' to Montreal.

This is the charm of the place, its admixture of the new and the old. To that charm you must add that of a diverse ethnic population, two-thirds of whom are of French origin, the remainder an assortment of English, Scots, Welsh, Irish, and men and women from all over the world. The city has been fortunate in that Drapeau brought with him to City Hall, as chairman of the city's Executive Committee, Lucien Saulnier, an exceptional administrator – a quality nobody has ever suggested to be outstanding in the personality of Jean Drapeau. Drapeau is the doer and the dreamer. Without a modern, decisive, and loyal administrator to guide and caution him, he might have fared very differently.

Looking back one realizes that Montreal has always been a community of 'firsts'. It was the first mission colony settled by devout Frenchmen in North America. From here the first missionary explorers and others, of the character of a Champlain, of a Daniel DuLhut, or of a LaSalle, set out to explore the hinterland, worked and fought their way down to the mouth of the Mississippi and far into the west. From here the first fur traders thrust their way into the heart of North America to make Montreal the fur capital of the world. Men in Montreal conceived and financed the building of the Canadian Pacific, the thin ribbons of steel that made Canada a country and a land of high hope. Montreal created the world's greatest inland port, a thousand miles from the open Atlantic, and went on from there to open the great seaway into the heart of North America.

Today, this city is not only a great social and commercial world-community. Like London or Paris, it is a city of many 'villages'; but it is unlike them in its essential ethnic duality. Not all Montrealers, by any means, are participants in the cosmopolitan life described in this chapter. Even so, when one thinks of Montreal in terms of the growth of North America and the development of Canada, one is bound by the record of events to say that it has always been among the leaders, more often than not *the* leader, in the constantly changing times of our continent.

It is not always a peaceful city. No cosmopolis ever is. Repeatedly since the day in 1760 when Vaudreuil surrendered to Amherst there have been flare-ups between the two major ethnic groups, in which the non-French minority is regarded, by no means rightly, as the economically stronger, the majority as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' (another myth that has gained wide credence) and the weaker of the two. Various matters recorded in these pages testify to the continuing or recurrent beliefs which such mythologies reflect. Montreal, like cosmopolitan communities the world over, is intrinsically a politically minded city, always has been, and, so far as one can see, always will be. Which is what makes being a Montrealer a joy and the activities of the city's fiery political life the essence of its history. In Montreal, a man never knows what is likely to happen next. All he knows is that whatever it is it will be exciting.

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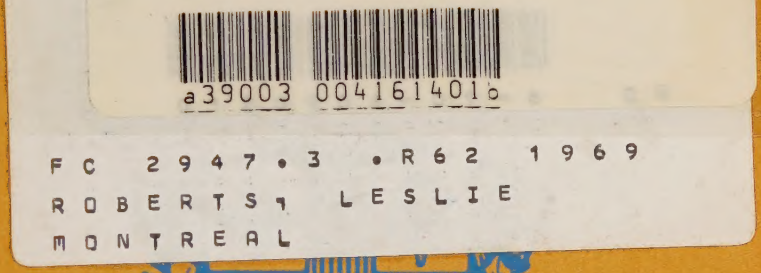
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